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*Misspelt in the Title.

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SERMON CCCCXXXVII.

BY REV. ALBERT BARNES,
PHILADELPHIA.

NEW YEAR'S SERMON FOR 1847.

A YEAR CONSIDERED AS A PART OF HUMAN LIFE.

We spend our years as a tale that is told.—Psalm xc. 9.

In the margin this is rendered "as a meditation," in accordance with the usual meaning of the Hebrew word הגה. Some have rendered it "as a thought," the most rapid of all things; some "as a sigh," a brief expression of sorrow that escapes from us and vanishes. In our common version it is rendered, "as a tale that is told;" an idle story that is designed to amuse for a moment; that is not worth seriously regarding or making an effort to remember; that soon passes away from the recollection. According to this interpretation, the meaning is, that life is suffered to pass as if it were a matter of no consequence; that it is spent in no employment that is really becoming our condition; and that it is worn away by trifles which leave no permanent impressions, and which produce no important results.

Either of these interpretations conveys not an unapt account of life as it is usually spent; and either of them will accord with the object which I have in view this morning. Either of them would furnish an appropriate description of the life which many of us have led during the past year. That year has gone for ever, like a tale that is told; like a passing thought; like a sigh that is gently breathed forth, and is soon over. By many of us it has been spent without any deep sense of the value of time; of the true objects of existence; of the bearing which the passing year has on our future being; of the importance of a year regarded as a part of human life.

At the beginning of a new year it is proper to look over the past, and to inquire, as we form our plans for the future, what is the purpose for which God has placed us in this world? The joys of the past year live now only in the recollection. Its sorrows

have been passed through, and, like the joys which we have experienced, are not to be recalled. Our departed joys leave the heart sad that they are passed; the sorrows that we have experienced leave it sad at the memory of the loss of friends, or property, or health—at the memory of blasted hopes, and of disappointments in our fondly-cherished plans. In spite of ourselves, and amidst all our attempts to be cheerful, no matter what the year may have been to us, there is a sombre feeling which comes over the soul, corresponding to the sombre season of the year; and in the midst of our rejoicings the mind will be pensive and sad. We cannot help saying to ourselves: "We shall never experience these pleasures again. We shall never again grasp the hand of the friend with whom we began the year, but who has passed away for ever. We shall never now see the fulfilment of the hopes that we then cherished, which seemed to us so bright and cheering in the prospect. We shall not be able to recall the hours that we have wasted in indolence or folly; to carry out the plans which have been defeated by the allurements of sensuality, or the fascinations of pleasure; or to secure now on our own character the happy influence which *might* have been secured if that whole year had been devoted to virtue and true religion. We shall never be able to go back over that part of our journey, to correct the errors that we have committed; and to extract the poisoned barb with which, by ingratitude or unkindness, we have pierced the bosom of a friend. We shall never have an opportunity of asking pardon of him whom we have injured, who is now in his grave; nor can we recall the harsh word or the unkind look that has fixed itself indelibly in the memory of those who love us. We cannot re-summon from the past this part of our probation as it hastens away to join the distant centuries in the land of shades, and make it now tributary to our salvation."

A year, as our lives are bounded, may be a different thing to us from what it is to other beings. It is different from what it was to the antediluvian patriarchs, when almost a thousand of our years gave them an opportunity of repairing past follies, and regaining what might have been lost—for a year bore scarcely a greater proportion to their lives than a month does to ours. It is different to us from what it is to an angelic being, to a redeemed spirit, to a lost soul; for by them it is not passed as a season of probation, and life with them is not soon to give way to another order of things. A year on earth; a year in heaven; a year in hell; if time is thus measured there, has its distinct features in each place. We are not concerned now, however soon we may be, with what a year is to the dwellers in other worlds, but we are much concerned to know what relation it sustains to our own existence here, and what bearing it may have on our existence hereafter. With this view, I propose to ask your attention, as a suitable subject for meditation at the close of one year, and the commencement of another, to this topic—*a year considered as a part of human life.*

I. A year, however it may be spent, is, in respect to each indi-

vidual, a very material part of his active life; of life that amounts to any thing. We speak much, as the Bible does, of the shortness of life; and yet we seldom form any correct idea of the reality on the subject, and are perpetually liable, in our anticipations, to make life longer than it really is. We fix the limit at seventy years—a limit brief in itself; not often reached; rarely passed. But even if life were made sure to us for seventy years, there are great and important abatements to be made from those years as to any positive efficiency in regard to the real purposes of existence. Let there be abstracted from those years, as life is in part ordered, the period of unconscious infancy; the period of playful childhood; the period in youth when we are merely *preparing* for the future—a time often extending into manhood; the periods of sickness, of sleep, of needful relaxation; of the infirmities of age, and a very large portion of the three-score years and ten will be absorbed. I do not say that the playful period of childhood, or the forming season of youth, or even relaxation, sickness, and infirmity, are wholly useless, and are to be cast out of the estimate of our actual existence; but I speak of what is commonly understood *as life*, when a man may make money, not merely learn how to make it; when he may cultivate his farm, not merely learn the art of doing it; when he may preach, not merely study to become prepared; when he may construct a steam-engine, not merely learn how to handle his tools; and when he may visit his patient, or plead a cause at the bar, instead of poring over his Galen or Coke. Abstract all that we *must* from life, and you take away much of what seems to be its enormous length to a child, and explain the reason why it appears so short to him who has run through it. If he had *had* seventy years of uninterrupted vigor and health, when he could have prosecuted life's great enterprises day and night, without sickness, infirmity, or sleep, life might appear long to the old man, too. But such is *not* life. Seventy such years are now unknown to man; he may count his lot a rare exception who can number any thing like fifty such years. The average length of active life is far below this standard.

What, think you, is the average life of the mass of men who have survived the perils of infancy and childhood, and who have passed through the season of preparation, and have entered upon their active duties? The average life of a minister of the Gospel is said now to be less than twenty years; and after all the long season of education in childhood and youth; after all his self-denial in procuring an education; after his seven years' patient toil in a college and seminary, and often at an expense beyond all his patrimony, what life holds out to the minister of religion in promise is, that he may labor not thrice as long as he has been employed in the mere business of making preparation. It is possible that the average of life in other professions *may be* somewhat more, but it is probable that this would not be a very unfair statement of all who are called to grapple with public duties; to meet the excitement at the bar, or in the hall of legislation; or to have all

the sensibilities of our nature taxed when seeing a patient lying in peril of death. The average life of the farmer is greater; that of the seaman, and the soldier, and the miner, and of various classes of manufacturers, less; and these twenty revolving periods commonly measure active human life. A year, then, becomes a very material part of our earthly existence.

Again. The real amount of active and efficient life, so short at best, is often greatly diminished by two other causes. One is, that many *begin* life late, and the early portion of what might have been their vigorous or useful existence, is spent in accomplishing little. Cromwell was a farmer until he was past his fortieth year, nor until that period did he appear with any degree of prominency on the stage of public affairs. Cowper composed the Task, translated the Iliad, and wrote nearly all his poems after he was fifty, and has left few memorials of what he did during what is commonly regarded as constituting nearly the whole of life. The early part of what might be vigorous and active life, is often spent in idleness, or in dissipation, or in abortive schemes; and in such cases the individual has advanced far on his way before there is any serious purpose of accomplishing any thing that will make mankind acquainted with the fact that he ever lived. Thus many a one that becomes a Christian, has spent his early years, and the best part of his life, in dissipation and riot; in vanity and frivolity; in unbelief and sensuality; and the time in which he can now truly *live*, and accomplish anything in the real purpose of living, is crowded into the period when already the infirmities of age begin to creep on. The other circumstance is this: life is often greatly abbreviated in its *closing* period. I mean not merely by death, or infirmity, but by other causes. A man has gained what he wished, and withdraws from the world. He has won a battle, and retires to repose on his laurels. He has amassed a fortune, and retires to enjoy it. Or he becomes disappointed by a few bold and unsuccessful efforts, and gives over in despair. When young, he plumed his wings for a lofty flight, and meant, like the eagle, to ascend and look at the sun; but the waxen plumes melted, and he fell to the earth to attempt to rise no more.

It is a rare instance, where one toils patiently on from youth to old age; forming a preparation for future usefulness by diligence and virtue in early life; securing all that was gained in youth by constant industry, and adding unceasingly to the treasured stock of wisdom, knowledge, and virtue, until the old man is gathered to his fathers like a shock of corn in his season, fully ripe. Newton was one such man—a man by his native talent "placed at the head of the race," and by his diligence setting an example to the humblest of mankind, who would wish to accomplish anything in wisdom or learning. Our own country at the present time contains one such man—yet lingering among us, but sinking to an honored grave—who may not be improperly mentioned here; a man who began life earlier than almost any who have been distinguished *in public affairs*, except the younger Pitt, and who has

gone now beyond the common limits of human existence; who made all of life at its commencement that could be made of it, and who, when other men withdrew from public affairs, seemed resolved to show the world what can be made of its close; who has accumulated more knowledge in the departments to which his attention has been turned than any other living man; who has filled up all his days with diligent acquisition and the discharge of great public duties, and who will probably die, after all the obloquy heaped upon him, as the most honored man—except one, with whom no mere mortal is to be compared—of the generations through which he has lived. But these are rare exceptions. They show what life *may be*, not what it commonly *is*. Usually short in itself, it is greatly abridged either at its beginning or its close; and a year, therefore, is a very material part of human existence.

II. A year is important as a part of human life, because it is, with many, a forming period, determining all that is to come. A single year, in certain circumstances, may do much more on this subject than many years at another period; and while, perhaps, to multitudes, that particular year may be undistinguished from others, yet to many it has an importance which no other one can have. It is to them *the decisive year;* the year that will be remembered though all others shall be forgotten. Let me illustrate this thought with reference to the year which has just now closed, and which, to many, ever onward will have an importance which can pertain to no other period of life. 1. It has been such to those who have during that year determined on their profession or calling in life—an act that is, probably, to shape your whole future course; to determine the nature of your studies, your plans, and your associates; and which is ultimately to measure the amount of your usefulness or your celebrity in the world. 2. It is so in regard to those who have entered on some new form of business—an act that will perhaps determine whether they will be rich or poor, honored or disgraced, when they leave the world. 3. It is so in respect to those who have formed new friendships, entered into new business relations, or contracted marriage—acts that are to affect all their destiny here below, perhaps their everlasting doom beyond the grave. 4. It is so in regard to those who have formed some plan to be developed far on in life—whose fruits they do not expect to see until many years shall have rolled away. 5. It is so in regard to those who, during the year, have surrendered themselves to some insidious form of temptation. They began the year strong in the principles of virtue. During the year those principles have been assailed with a force which they did not anticipate, and which they were not prepared to resist, and they yielded. They have taken friends to their embrace, from whom at the beginning of the year they would have recoiled with abhorrence. They have admitted conceptions of guilt to their bosoms, to which, until the year now closed, they were strangers. They have visited places of amusement or infamy, for the first time, from which a year ago they would have turned away with

unutterable loathing. They have, for the first time, indulged freely in intoxicating drinks; allied themselves with dangerous companions; contracted habits of evil, destined hereafter to grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength; and to which they are hereafter ever to be slaves. They have for the first time disobeyed a father's and a mother's law in being found in a place of revelry and sin. They have for the first time drawn tears of anguish from a mother's eyes, or caused a sister to blush at the mention of her brother's name. These things send an influence ever onward; and far on in some future scene of poverty and disgrace; in the lonely dungeon; an outcast, in the alms-house, or dying with a broken heart, a wrecked and ruined man, the year 1846 will be remembered as, by a bad eminence, the forming period of your life. That momentary act of yielding to temptation; that indulgence in some guilty passion; that hour when first you drank a social glass, never dreaming that you *could be* a drunkard, may seem to be unimportant to you now, and the year which has just closed may appear to have no special moment as distinguished from others; but the time may come when, in the beautiful and sad language of Job, with reference to the year of his birth, you may "open your mouth and curse" it, and say: "Let that year be darkness, let not God regard it from above; neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. Let it not be joined unto other years; let it be solitary; let no joyful voice come therein. Let the stars of its nights be dark; let it look for light but have none, neither let it see the dawning of the day." 6. Again. The past year has been important above other years in reference to those who have given up the heart to God; who have renounced the world, and who have begun truly to live to the honor of their Creator. By them that year will be remembered with songs and rejoicings for ever. It will determine their character, their course, their destiny during all the present life; and then their character, their companions, their destiny to all eternity. It will be remembered by them with joy, when they lie on the bed of death; when they stand at the bar of God; and when "the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll."

III. A year is an important portion of human life, when considered as a part of probation for eternity. We have already seen that it is a material part when considered in its relation to *active* life, whatever may be regarded as the object of living. It is especially so, however, when considered as a part of the probation for a future state, and when we reflect on the manner in which it is actually spent by the mass of mankind. The period of probation for eternity is indeed commonly much longer than what I have spoken of as the *active* life of man; for it includes not only vigorous and healthy manhood, but childhood and youth—the very best period of life regarded as probation; the period of sickness, bereavement, and trial—times when, though a man can do little for

the present life, he can do much for that which is to come; and old age, which though the least favorable of all the periods of life as a season of probation, is still a time when, though the old man can no longer go to the bank or the exchange; when he can no longer plead the cause of injured justice, or lift up his voice in the senate house, he may *possibly* secure the salvation of his soul.

Life—all of life, except unconscious infancy, the ravings of delirium, the stupefactions of disease, when the mental powers refuse to perform their office, and perhaps some forms of old age, second *infancy*, when there is no memory, or judgment, or sense—is a season of probation for eternity. It has indeed other objects, for there are duties growing out of our relations here; and, if man is to be himself the expounder of the design for which he lives, it has many other objects, and probation is the least and the last. But whatever other objects there may be for which man is to live, he is in all things a candidate for another world, and all other things are to be subordinate to that. He is here with reference to a changeless state of being. He lives and acts for that, whether he is conscious of it, or cares about it or not. Each word, thought, deed, sends on an influence beyond the present life; the account is closed at the end of each year, nay, each moment; and he will meet every thing which he has done, registered with unerring accuracy, the moment he crosses the line which divides one world from another. If this be so, then a year of human existence has an importance which is not attached to it by the great body of men, for the results of conduct during one year may be multiplied beyond our power of computing now, into the joys or sorrows of eternity. And if this be so, then the fact that a year is wasted, or what is the same thing, *misimproved*, in regard to this great purpose of being, has an importance which claims the attention of every traveler to another world. To the great mass of mankind, it is a sad fact, that the year which has just now closed has been thus a wasted year in regard to the great purpose for which God sent them into the world. They may have improved it for other purposes, but not for this. They may have gained much, but they have secured nothing of that purity of heart without which no one shall see God. They may have won many conquests, but they have secured no victory over the "lusts which war against the soul." Nay, to human view, so far from making *advance* in preparation for heaven, they are *receding* while life wears away. At the close of the year, they were, so far as we can see, less likely to be saved than they were at the beginning. They had less tenderness of feeling; less susceptibility of impression; less disposition to attend to religion; less respect for the Gospel; and they were more under the dominion of worldliness and sinful affections; more engrossed in the cares of life; more proud and unteachable; more tenacious of their opinions; more under the influence of companions and associates who "cause to err," and who lead the soul away from God.

As there can be no doubt that there are some of this very de-

scription in this house to-day, I beg leave to address myself to you directly. You will concede the point, I trust, that life is a season of probation—a point which you will probably be as ready to concede now, when we have passed through another year, and when you *see* how little a year accomplishes in regard to the usual objects of human pursuit—as you would be at any time. How then has that departed year been spent by *you* as a part of probation? What advances have you made in the real purposes of existence? What is now the probability of your salvation compared with what it *seemed* to be when you began the year? Let me state a few things, all of which you will doubtless admit to be true.

(1.) First, you have passed through another year, during which you have been all the while on trial for eternity. You have been in the world where this is the great purpose for which it was made, and is preserved. You have lived in the world where the Son of God became incarnate and died to make an atonement for sin; where the offer of salvation is made to all human beings; where the Holy Spirit comes to apply salvation to the hearts of transgressors; where many have been prepared for heaven. You have passed the year amidst great privileges and advantages; in a Christian land, with nothing to hinder you from becoming a Christian if you chose; and where, perhaps, during the whole year you have regularly heard the gospel.

(2.) Secondly, you have spent the year without religion. You began it without religion; you have gone through all its changes without it; you have closed it without it. Neither at its commencement, or during its progress, or at its close, have you had any true love to God, or repentance for sin, or faith in the Redeemer. At no period during the year, have you been prepared to die. At no period, if you *had* died, would you have entered heaven. The year to you has been, in regard to the great purposes of life, a *wasted* year; and were it stricken out now from the list of your years, you would suffer no loss by it in regard to the salvation of the soul. You do not yourself believe that you are any *better* prepared to meet God than you were when the year began.

(3.) Thirdly, many whom I address have gone through the year without having taken one step, or even cherished one sincere desire, to secure their salvation. In all that year you have not penitently and seriously kneeled, and asked God to have mercy on your soul. You have not once sat down to read the Bible with a desire to know what you must do to be saved. You have not listened to the gospel with a deep personal interest—a sincere wish to know what the truth i, and what a man must do if he would be happy when he dies. You have not formed a distinct plan or purpose *ever* to make this a serious matter; and amidst all the schemes of which the year has been prolific; all the subjects of inquiry—commercial, financial, political, scientific, or moral which have occupied your attention, the question how a sinner may be

saved, and an immortal soul made happy, has come in for no share of your investigations.

(4.) Fourthly, whatever you may have *gained*, you have gained nothing on this the most important of all subjects on which the mind of men can ever be employed. You may have gained a friend; you may have gained property; you may have done something towards establishing a reputation which will not at once be forgotten when you are dead. But, in this great matter of salvation, you are as poor as you were when you began the year, and have done nothing to secure the treasures where "moth and rust do not corrupt," or to make clear your "title to mansions in the skies."

(5.) Fifthly, with some of you, the year has been passed in utter frivolity. Its chronicle would be a sorry record, on which you yourself would blush to look, of time spent at the toilet, in trifling conversation, in frivolous amusements, in reading that which did nothing to improve the understanding, or to purify the heart; in idleness, in gossip, in needless slumber, in pastimes whose only object was to make you forget that there *was* such a thing as *time*. You had already forgotten that there was an *eternity;* and the aim of living has been to make the whole of existence *a blank*. Perchance, also, some whom I address have spent the year in scenes whose recollection in days to come will only pour burning sulphur on a conscience laid bare to the wrath of God.

(6.) You are then, sixthly, now nearer the grave, but not nearer heaven, than you were when you began the year. You have a harder heart; you are more under the influence of the world; you are bound to this life by more attractive ties; you are less accessible to the gospel; you are more disposed to turn away from the counsels of wisdom. There was more hope of your salvation to human view at the beginning of the year than there is now. "Hope deferred" in regard to your salvation, has "made the heart" of many a friend "sick;" and already a father and a mother begin to look upon the prospect that you will be saved with despair.

Think then how short life is at best; how few are its active years; how important a portion a single year *may* be, and *is*, of your earthly existence; and then think of a whole year more, now absolutely wasted in regard to the great purpose for which God placed you in the world. Think how little you have gained that is worth living for even on the lowest principles of calculation about the value of things, and how soon even that little may be taken away; and then think what you have lost. To-day, you might have been a Christian. The light of salvation, with the cheering light of this beautiful morning, might have shone on your path; the peace which results from reconciliation with God might have taken up its permanent abode in your heart; and the last sun of the year which has just "hastened to its setting," might have gone down on you as a child of God, and an heir of salvation. Though it had been the last time that you were to behold

him, and this morning's sun might have greeted other eyes but not yours, your souls would have had peace; for you would have gone where there are brighter skies, and where there is no need of "the light of the sun or the moon."

IV. Any one year may be of unutterable importance as a part of human life, because it may be the time when probation will end, and life closed. To millions the year now closed has had this unspeakable moment. It was the period ordained of old in which they were to give up their great account; the outward boundary which God had affixed to their existence on earth. They had lived as long as infinite wisdom had judged sufficient to secure the purposes of their being, and their places were wanted for an advancing generation. A new race that was coming up needed houses where to live; land to cultivate that they might be supported; air to breathe, and a place where to prepare themselves for eternity; and it was needful for the former generation to be taken away. The Great Husbandman removed them as the farmer does the dry and withered stalks of the last year's harvest, that he may clear the ground for the green sprouts of another crop. So the earth, the great harvest-field for heaven, is swept all over of its old inhabitants every thirty years, and more than thirty millions of this cumbering population is removed each year. It is not, indeed, done all at once, nor is one place made wholly vacant at any one time; but the work is not less certain, nor the sweeping away less entire. Where are the armies of Semiramis, of Cyrus, of Xerxes? Where are the hosts that mingled in strife in the conflicts of the "Roses?" Where are the Pilgrims that settled New England? Where is Penn, and where are the Indians with whom he agreed to live in peace? Where is there a solitary human being to tell us what was on the earth at the beginning of the last century? All gone—swept away, as if they had all been cut down at once.

So of us. Of any one year, and of any one of us, there can be no certainty but that *that* year may have all the importance derived from the fact that it is the closing year of probation. To tens of millions the year which has just closed, has had the pre-eminence over all the other years of their existence, that it has sundered them from all that they held dear on the earth; that it has consigned their bodies to the grave, and sent their spirits up to the awful bar of God. Among them are not a few that we knew and loved. They began the year with us in the land of the living; as the year rolled on they gave us the parting hand, and its last sun set on their graves. Events have shown that in our individual history, that year was not to have this eminence. Whether to any specified individual this eminence among the years, shall belong to the one on which we have now entered, is known to no human being. To some of us, it *will* have that eminence, and before its close the record on the tomb will tell the passing stranger, that this was the year on which *we* learned what it is to die and stand *before* God.

We have entered on another year. We endeavor to cheer each other, in a world that we all feel to be full of dangers and sorrows, by mutual congratulations and kind wishes for the future. I will not attempt to penetrate the future. I would not know it if I could. I will not damp the ardor of your joyous anticipations. I will not now dwell on the prospect that many of the tender ties which bind us together, before the close of this year will be broken; that many of our hearts will bleed; that many of these eyes will run down with tears. If I live I shall see all this soon enough; if I die, you will see it in me. But I will not anticipate it now. I will join in your felicitations and wishes for happiness and prosperity. But stand, fellow-traveller to eternity, may I not also ask one thing of you? It is, that this year may be wholly devoted to the great purposes for which life is given; that you will stand no longer as the barren fig-tree, a mere cumberer of the ground; that you will this day resolve before your Maker, that, by his grace, the year 1846 shall be the last wasted, unprofitable, ungrateful, irreligious year of your lives—the last year on which you will close your eyes on truth, and live without the hope of heaven; that by the grace of God, the sun shall no longer rise and set in his annual revolutions on you a thoughtless, impenitent, unpardoned sinner. It is that you will now form a purpose by his help to reach forward to the eternal crown; and that as the days of the advancing year roll rapidly on, each morning shall witness the consecration of yourself to your God, and that in the shades of each evening you will render him praise. So living, its months, and weeks, will pass away without regret—for they will be bearing you nearer to your eternal home. So living, if you see its close, you will arrive there with far different feelings from those with which you ended the last year. And so living, if you *are* to be arrested during this year, it would not disturb or alarm you much, if "a still small voice" should be born to your ear this day amidst its joyous congratulations and its hopes, saying, "This year thou shalt die."

"So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but sustained and soothed
By unfaltering trust in Christ, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

SERMON CCCCXXXVIII.

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF REV. WILLIAM J. ARMSTRONG, D.D.

DELIVERED IN PARK STREET CHURCH, DEC. 9, 1846.

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BY REV. NEHEMIAH ADAMS,
BOSTON, MASS.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.—PSALM CXVI., 15.

THE journey begun by our friend and brother, in health and with pleasant anticipations, has been completed on the bier. The funeral rites have been performed in another city. He has lain down, "till the heavens be no more." His companions in death are distributed to their last resting-places. The storm is hushed. The fragments of the wreck are disappearing. I was prepared to say, the winds and waves no longer toll the bell which for several days was lifted above the waters on a portion of the wreck; but I learn this evening that the bell, though sunk beneath the surface, is now and then urged up by the swell of the sea, and thus imitating, as it were, the expiring efforts of the dying, tolls with a convulsive stroke. The full moon has many times walked in brightness over the scene of desolation, where the equal pulses of the sea now seem to deny the well-known agony and ruin.

All the incidents of the disaster have been spread far and wide, and have produced their impression upon the public mind, which is soon to be occupied with other events of various importance, while this will take its place among the historical facts which are repeated with an interest lessening from day to day with the lapse of time. To many, here and elsewhere, however, it will never lose its interest while life remains; the impressions made by it will be identified with their inmost thoughts and feelings; and in their characters and conduct its sacred influence will be felt to their dying day.

We come together at a time far enough removed from the event to admit of calm contemplation and reflection, and not far enough for any of us to have lost the vivid impressions at first made by it.

We all feel the need of soothing and consolatory thoughts, and the natural desire to know the facts in the case has been fully satisfied. The official relation of our friend and brother to the Missionary House in this city gives a propriety to this public memorial of him, which our private love for him, and our disposition to do him honor, are happy to acknowledge and improve. The spirits of just men made perfect need no earthly honor to secure

for them any happiness or reward; yet it cannot be a matter of indifference to a good man in heaven to know that surviving companions and fellow servants appreciate his character and his services, and that "devout men carry him to his burial and make great lamentation over him."

A common ruin buried this servant of Christ, and forty or fifty others, in instant death. He was distinguished among them by his ministerial office, by his pious endeavors to instruct them in the time of peril, and by his most fervent and affecting supplications, and by the impressiveness of his demeanor during the whole trying scene. But the God whom he served, and whom he delighted to honor, did not interpose to distinguish him from his companions by any apparent alleviation in his sufferings or in the manner of his death. A portion of the deck fell upon him and upon many others with him. Who could have told at that moment by any sign which the accident conveyed, which of them feared God,—if any of them did not? "This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked." In calamities, the impression would be made upon the mind, were it not for faith, that God disregards his servants when he mingles them in a promiscuous overthrow. He suffers the sea to destroy them, or the falling weight to crush them, or the cannibal savage to devour them, and does not come forth to arrest any law of nature, or do any special favor in their behalf. If we sometimes see good men rescued by a special interposition of Providence, we see the same in the case of wicked men; and if we see wicked men arrested by death on their way to their families, we see the same in the experience of eminently good men.

No one has ever lost a friend by a sudden calamity, especially a friend who was known and loved as a good man, without having his feelings and his faith somewhat tried by the seeming disregard of Providence in the circumstances attending the loss of life. There is a natural expectation that God will shield the person of an eminently good man from indignity; that there will be some special mark of regard in the manner in which, if his life must be destroyed, he will receive the fatal stroke. We invest the laws of nature with something of our own feelings of reverence for the persons of those whom we respect and love. We almost expect to see, in the providence of God, the same regard for them.

There are times, indeed, when the manner of a good man's death has something of beauty, or sublimity, or of peculiar fitness, no less noticeable than the well-known coïncidence in the death of two Presidents of the United States upon the anniversary of our national independence. While it is the general law of Providence that one event happens to the righteous and to the wicked, the sovereignty of God makes exceptions to it, in certain cases, in favor of good men. We are not to expect them so as to feel disappointed when they do not occur; nor, when a good man dies, like John the Baptist, with no sign of special regard for

him or the manner of his death, are we to conclude that he is less an object of divine favor than another. We bow with reverence and awe before that appointment of divine Providence by which the laws of nature fulfill their commission without respect of persons, teaching us impressively the truth revealed in Scripture, that life is a scene of trial and of reward; that we are not to expect the divine testimony in our behalf by any remarkable providence; but in the exercise of faith, our hope reaching to that which is within the veil, we must meekly bow to the common lot of man in the outward circumstances of providential events, though by them we may make our grave with the wicked, and be "numbered with the transgressors."

The inference, however, which might be drawn from such an undistinguished end, is contradicted by the Word of God. The seeming neglect of good men at such times, and the apparent want of regard for them in some of the events of Providence has no foundation in fact. At all times, under all circumstances, and when there is the least apparent interposition of heaven in their behalf, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Though hunger, and cold, and fear, and sad thoughts about the family circle, and the painfulness of spending a festival day* amid the perils of a wreck, the violent winds and waves, and finally the falling deck, and the engulphing waters, indicated no regard to the man of God more than to any other; yet his death was an event of interest and importance in the sight of the Most High.

The text asserts this general truth: THE DEATH OF GOOD MEN, UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, IS DEEPLY INTERESTING IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

Among the multitude of deaths, their death, like a valuable thing in a promiscuous heap, is precious to Him. It is not forgetten nor disregarded as an ordinary event; it is invested with peculiar interest in the sight of God. A few considerations will illustrate this truth.

1. *The death of a good man is a great and important event in the history of his redemption.*

God chose him in Christ before the world was. He called him by his special grace into his kingdom; he applied to him the benefits of the Saviour's death; he sealed him by the Holy Spirit; he has made all things thus far work together for good. That saint is to be among the fruits of the Saviour's sufferings and death; his salvation is a necessary part of the great work of redemption. When probation with him is about to end, can it be a less interesting event to the Most High, than the event of his conversion on which God bestowed that "mighty power" which the Apostle compares to that "which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places?" The husbandman who planted the tree and dressed it, and watched it, comes for the fruit; although the fruit be gathered

* The day of the Annual Thanksgiving in New York and sixteen other States.

by shaking the tree, he is not angry with the tree, nor neglectful of the fruit which he causes to fall.

2. *The death of a good man is precious in the sight of God, because the life of such a man is intimately connected with the interests of the kingdom of God in this world.*

To every servant God has committed a trust; from every servant who deserves the name, the cause of God in this world receives advantage. Some are put in trust with children to educate for future usefulness. Others are placed in a circle of relatives and friends for an example and a reproof, and as silent witnesses for God. They keep the consciences of others awake; they serve as a standard by which others judge of propriety and impropriety in their own conduct. Others are placed in situations where it seems as though they could do nothing but pray; their prayers, however, are essential to the purposes of God.

Others occupy places of more obvious influence and importance; but to every real servant of God in this world, there is committed some trust. He may be only like a single stone in the wall; its presence is not remarked upon, but its absence would be; and its removal, therefore, becomes an important event. He who orders everything in this world as Head over all things to the church does not suffer his faithful servants to die by chance; their removal is an event of too much importance to be left without special care and appointment; it is to be considered in each case whether this good example may safely be removed, or that restraining influence over others cease, or those prayers be suspended; whether the interests of large bodies of men, and the general affairs of the Redeemer's kingdom, will permit the removal of one servant of God and another, at particular times. Christ "has the keys of death."

> "A Christian cannot die before his time,
> The Lord's appointment is the servant's hour."

3. *The immediate effect of the affliction upon survivors, cannot but render the death of a good man precious in the sight of God.*

I see the tents of Israel in affliction. The bell which survived on the wreck, tolling the knell of the dead, seems as though it had received a special commission to utter the feelings of the whole church of God in this land. God never does anything, however dark and trying, which diminishes the confidence and love of his true children. The man who should wantonly do a deed that would plunge the whole people of God into sorrow, it would have been better for him if he had never been born. A paper dropped at the door by the carrier, containing an account of the "wreck of the Atlantic," gives the first intimation to his household respecting the possible fate of the husband and father. With every support which God affords the mind at such a moment, there is of course a degree of anguish which He, who "does not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men," would not permit without special consideration, and for wise and benevolent purposes.

I look away from the dwelling where the messenger conveys

to that family the intelligence which is to clothe them in sackcloth. I cannot trust myself to hear that burst of grief as one member of the household after another receives the tidings; I cannot even think of the scene with composure. But God knew beforehand how it would break the heart; he had written beforehand all those tears in his book. The death of that saint, bringing such an effect with it, must have been precious in the sight of God. He is the father of the fatherless, and the widow's God and Judge. He knew how it would afflict and grieve multitudes of his people; it must have been appointed, therefore, and fulfilled by him with a consideration which an event so important for its immediate and its future influence on near and dear relatives and friends, required. Faith sees the guardian hand of God in the promiscuous ruin; the good man among the victims or the falling deck is not like one of an uncounted flock; the rude blow, and the reckless surge, and the sands hastening to entomb him, are not the true exponents of the feelings of the Most High at such an event. But "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," "and precious shall their blood be in his sight," if for no other reason, because he considers and appreciates the feelings of those who will be deeply afflicted by the death of relatives and friends.

4. *The death of good men is so commonly a means of glorifying God, that it cannot be otherwise than important and interesting in his sight.*

Though we look to the life of a man for the evidence of his goodness, we expect his death to illustrate it. The views and feelings of a man in that honest hour, when he has no motive to deceive others, when he is expecting soon to stand before One whom he cannot deceive, are a powerful testimony to his private character and to the sincerity and value of his religion. Not to dwell on this obvious fact, I will only allude to the recognition of it by our Lord, of whom the Evangelist says, speaking of the Saviour's intimations to Peter respecting that disciple's end, "This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." We know that the death of good men has ever been a powerful means of good. It must, therefore, have great importance and interest in the sight of God; so that the time, and all the attending circumstances of it upon which its influence so much depends, are of course ordered by infinite wisdom.

Let us illustrate this, and at the same time make a profitable use of it in the way of consolation, by referring to the event which we now mourn. Fears had for some time been entertained that our departed friend would not long continue with us. This was his own impression, and that of others, owing to some alarming symptoms. Supposing then that our fears with regard to him would, in the course of nature, soon have been fulfilled, we may, without undertaking to interpret the purposes and providence of God, see reasons to believe that the event of his death was, in the sense explained, precious in his sight.

For, in the first place, he was spared the pain of a lingering ill-

ness, in which bodily suffering would not have been so hard for such a man as he to bear as the suspension of his labors.

Again, he was made the instrument of religious consolation, and it may be of salvation, to a number of his fellow creatures, in the hour of peril. The survivors will remember his exhortations and prayers so long as they remember their deliverance. Will they, can they neglect such a salvation and finally perish? Most of those who were near him when the deck fell, it is supposed, perished as he did, at once, by the blow. He knelt in prayer with them and others, and before praying requested them to remain upon their knees a few moments after his prayer should be finished. Perhaps in those moments of silent prayer, amid the howlings of the winds and waves, and the violent motion of the ship, the words of Scripture (Mark iv. 35—41) which he had just read, in which the Saviour says to the stormy wind, "Peace, be still," had a fulfilment in the presence of the Redeemer with his converting grace; and from that scene of ruin and death some souls with him may have immediately passed into heaven. Had he preached a sermon from a pulpit which God should have blessed to the instant conversion of a few souls, we should have looked upon him as one on whom God had placed the seal of his special favor. We may find hereafter that such a seal was placed upon his last brief exhortation; and it may be, that as a constellation comes up in the sea and takes its place in the firmament, so a number of souls rose up from that wreck and took their place together in heaven, while he, their guiding star, draws the eyes of heaven to him and to those who may have been saved by him; for indeed he has turned many to righteousness, and will shine as the stars for ever and ever. We fear to say a word which may possibly encourage late repentance; yet we cannot limit the grace of God. In view of his known usefulness and of the influence which he may have exerted in the salvation of some, we can say with truth that such a death as his, in the sense already explained, is precious in the sight of God.

But this is not all. Throughout the large district of country over which his recent labors have extended, it would have been difficult to find the man whose death, under similar circumstances, would have produced a deeper sensation. The reason is, he had established himself in the affections of good men, as an eminently pious, simple-hearted, devoted servant of the Lord Jesus, to whom the cause of human salvation, the spread of the gospel through the world was dearer than all earthly comfort, and even than life. We may say with reverence and submission, it seems to have been important "by what death" such a man "should glorify God."

It is not presumption, then, to say that we see divine wisdom and care in the manner of his death. To all the churches of the land, wherever his influence has been felt, and indeed to every Christian in this and in all lands who has ever heard of him, or may hear of his death, he preaches, and will continue to preach,

a sermon on the subject of missions whose influence cannot fail to be felt. Seldom does God set a man in such a pulpit. In the full exercise of his missionary and ministerial office he disappears from our view. He is taken up by a whirlwind into heaven. Many an Elisha already catches his spirit and power; and not only the sons of the prophets, but all Israel see and feel that the cause of missions had a good man taken from its head that day. Had he gone to heaven from his peaceful bed, had he first spent lingering years of infirmity, removed from active labor, the death of such a man would, at any time have produced a deep impression; but he left his work at an hour when God summoned the nation to look on and see him die. The fame of the missionary cause is lifted up on the wings of the wind. It is impressed more deeply on the minds of men through the power of sympathy; they cannot but regard it as a striking providence, that such a man should have perished in that wreck, and seeing the testimony of survivors to his excellent goodness, they feel that God must have intended to honor him and his employment by such a death. Happy man! Chosen of God to stir the affections of his people by their love and sympathy for their friend and fellow-servant towards that cause which was his life. The exhortation is always appropriate—"Be still, and know that I am God;" but in this case we feel something more than submission; we are not satisfied at merely being still; we are disposed to exult with our glorified brother, and to shout, Salvation! salvation! for him, and through him, instrumentally, for the dying heathen. Precious, indeed, in the sight of God, was such a death! Then we will cherish the remembrance of it, not so much to weep for him, but to fulfill the purposes of God in it.

WILLIAM J. ARMSTRONG was born at Mendham, New Jersey, October 29, 1796, and was the son of the Rev. Amzi Armstrong, D.D. He was the eldest of nine children; five of his six sisters and one brother are now living.

His parents cherished a strong desire that he should become a minister of the Gospel. At the age of thirteen he was ready to enter college, but his constitution was not robust, and he therefore remained at home, laboring upon a farm, till his eighteenth year, by which means he acquired great bodily vigor. In the autumn of 1814, he entered the junior class of the college at Princeton, then under the presidency of the Rev. Dr. Green. During the five years previous to his entering college he devoted much time to general reading, and always considered those years as a most important and influential period in his studies.

In youth he had great exuberance of feeling, was sprightly and joyful, entering with his whole soul into the amusements, and also, as he frequently complained, the follies of youth, though it is believed he contracted no vicious habits. His first decided religious impressions were produced by a sermon which his father preached to the young people of his charge, with special reference to his

son. These impressions were partially lost for a season; and his natural ardor and impetuosity were so great that his father wept and prayed much at the thought of his exposure to the dangers of a college life; but in the course of a few months, during a special attention to religion in college, he indulged a hope of acceptance with God. It is believed to be this attention to religion at Nassau Hall which gave occasion to that useful tract in the series of the American Tract Society, called "Questions and Counsel," by Rev. Dr. Green.

From this period Mr. Armstrong looked to the sacred ministry as his profession; and it is an interesting and well authenticated fact, that he thought seriously at that time of devoting himself to the work of a Foreign Mission. He made a profession of his faith in Mendham, in the spring of 1815, his beloved father being thus owned and blessed of God in first calling his attention to the concerns of his soul, and in receiving him to the Christian church.

He completed his college course in 1816, with a respectable standing as a scholar. His father then had charge of a flourishing academy in Bloomfield, New Jersey. Placing himself under the care of a presbytery as a candidate for the ministry, he began the study of theology under the direction of his father, whom he assisted in the academy. From time to time he submitted himself for examination to the Rev. Dr. Richards, then a pastor in Newark. At the expiration of two years, he was licensed to preach. He then spent a year at the seminary at Princeton, preaching on the Sabbath and at other times as he had opportunity.

Being thus prepared for the exercise of his office, he devoted himself to the work of Home Missions, under the direction of the General Assembly's Board. His first place of labor was Albemarle, Virginia, near the residence of Thomas Jefferson. No church existed there; the Lord's Supper had never, so far as it could be ascertained, been administered in the place. Mr. Armstrong labored two years in Charlottesville, Albemarle county, now the seat of the University of Virginia, with marked success. A Presbyterian church was gathered as the result of his labors, and it still flourishes. There were several interesting cases of conversion among infidels under his preaching, some of them the friends and associates of Jefferson, who expressed himself with some feeling on hearing of their conversion. These converted infidels became members of the newly organized church.

The declining state of his father's health recalled Mr. Armstrong to New Jersey, in 1821. In the summer of that year Bloomfield was blessed with a revival of religion, and Mr. Armstrong labored in it, with much zeal and success, in connection with the pastor, the Rev. Gideon N. Judd. Several churches were desirous of having him for their pastor. He accepted a unanimous call from the First Presbyterian Church in Trenton, New Jersey, and labored there with faithfulness and success, till the spring of 1824.

When the Rev. Dr. John H. Rice accepted a professorship in the Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, and left the pastoral office

in the First Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Virginia, he recommended Mr. Armstrong to that church, as their minister, and by his earnest solicitation he was induced to accept their call. They to whom the character or reputation of Dr. Rice are familiar, will regard this as no slight testimony in favor of our beloved friend. For ten years he was the devoted, beloved, and successful pastor of that people, of which abundant illustrations might be given.

The synods of Virginia and North Carolina organized a Board for Foreign Missions in the spring of 1834, with a view to missionary labors through the agency of the American Board. Mr. Armstrong was appointed its secretary and agent, and took a dismission from the church in Richmond. Many and very tender were the ties which were necessarily broken by this event. The people at first did not believe that it was their duty to make so great an effort as it would cost to part with him; but in view of the cause to be promoted, they consented in a manner honorable to themselves and to the gospel which they professed to love. The sacrifice on his part and that of his family was great. Those who know the state of the roads in Virginia at certain seasons of the year, will admire the self-denying spirit of the man who, after ten years' experience of the comforts of a city, and, as one calls it, "the sweet security of streets," willingly subjected himself to the labors and perils, day and night, on those wearisome highways. He continued in this service till the fall of 1835, when he was appointed one of the Secretaries for Correspondence of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and removed for Boston. His particular department of labor was the home correspondence. In 1836, in compliance with the advice of the committee, he removed his family to the city of New York, expecting to return to Boston after two or three years, but considerations connected with the health of his family prolonged his residence there till his death. Though this involved a considerable modification of his official duties, he was most fully and usefully employed. His great delight was to preach. The Sabbath usually found him in the pulpit, almost always pleading the cause of missions; and during the week, he was never so happy as in presenting the cause in meetings for missionary purposes.

The testimonials are abundant with respect to his uncommon excellence as a pastor. His labors in the ministry as well as in the missionary cause, frequently seemed excessive; but his early physical training gave him uncommon muscular energy, which enabled him to work for twenty-eight years with remarkable efficiency. When a pastor, the cause of Missions held a large place in his thoughts. Several of those who joined the church under his ministry became Foreign Missionaries.

In his employment as Secretary of the American Board, he was eminently faithful, industrious, and zealous. No man loved the quiet of home more than he, nor sighed more for rest from incessant change; but after parting with the Rev. Messrs. Spaulding and Scudder, on their return to the heathen, he said: "I prefer to

live and die in this work." His earnest desire was to awaken Christians to prayer and effort for a dying world. He has been known to go into the office of one of the religious papers to look over the exchange papers in search for intelligence of revivals of religion, knowing that love for the heathen and contributions to the cause of Missions are generally in proportion to the increase of piety in the churches.

His zeal for the heathen grew out of his love for his fellow-men, which showed itself in more ways than one. When in Virginia, he was deeply interested in the slaves, and exerted himself much for their benefit, and in efforts for the peaceable abolition of slavery. His well-known zeal in this cause nearly cost him his life. He was once waylaid by two men who were opposed to his views and feelings on the subject of slavery, and received from one of them a gash through his hat with a large sharp weapon.

But I love to think and speak of him as a man. Aside from our respect and love for him in his official relations, the hearts of all of us flowed forth to him as a good man. He impressed different friends, of course, by different qualities; but one thing in him was peculiar and obvious to all who knew him—the union of intense feeling with mildness of demeanor. I have seen him, in public speaking, roused to an energy of feeling which has made me think how well it was that such strength of emotion was controlled by religious principles; in private, however, his constant smile, and his gentle, humble, conciliating manner, was like beautiful waters over volcanic places, imaging the heavens above them, but concealing the depths beneath. The impression has been made on my own mind by my intercourse with him, that he must naturally have had much to contend with in the strength of his passions; but this impression has been made only by the strength of his religious emotions, and by some instances of great control over his feelings, which it was evident could have been gained only by one who had found occasion for, and had practised, vigorous self-discipline. He was a lovely and pleasant man. He made you feel that he loved you; and you involuntarily loved him. He was the delight and joy of his family-circle. The last Sabbath evening of his life he spent in hearing his children recite portions of Scripture and the Assembly's Catechism. It seems to have been the mysterious impression in that family-circle that their rich blessing in him was not long to continue.

I will not analyze his character. I cannot make a cool and critical estimate of his several talents. He stands before me as a holy, humble, self-denying, meek, ardent, affectionate man. He has taken his place in our hearts, and will always keep it, as one who deserves and has secured our best affections, our deepest respect, and our most tender and endearing recollections.

And is he gone! We sat with him in the Committee meeting the Tuesday afternoon before his death, when more than once he awakened a pleasant smile by his quiet humor and happy illustra-

tions; and the next Tuesday evening I found myself, by appointment of the Committee, meditating his funeral sermon! Dear associate, brother, friend! thy path to heaven has been so suddenly made, and is yet so radiant with glory, that we do not, we can not, feel that the connection between thee and us is severed. May we never feel that it is severed. We cannot think of thee as dead! Thou, rather, art the living, and among the living; and we are among the dead.

As members of the Committee and officers of the Board we will cherish the memory of thy zeal, thy fervent spirit, thine exemplary faith and patience, thy amiable disposition and conduct, which made thee a pleasant associate and fellow-laborer. We desire to fulfil the duties of our office in a manner which we think would receive thy present commendation and thy future congratulation.

Brethren in the ministry; friends in important places of trust; parents and fellow Christians! There is an admonition to you in this event, peculiarly impressive. You see in the removal of this friend and brother that no usefulness, no supposed importance in your life to the cause of Christ or to the happiness of others, obtains exemption from death. Office, high and important duties, usefulness, are no security against a sudden removal from the world. God is dependent on no man's talents or help. Here is a family, consisting of a wife, and five children between the ages of six months and eighteen years. O death! relent, and spare that husband and the father of such a family! The inexorable stroke descends. God of our life! we own thy sovereign control over us. "We are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled." In the language of the common law, "a man's house is his castle." We see that it is no defence against the mandates of Him who "openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth."

I would remark to my reverend fathers and brethren in the ministry, that there seems to have been a divine recognition of the pastoral office and labors of our deceased friend in his last hours, though he had not been for many years a pastor. But while a pastor he was preëminently faithful. He loved his work, he loved the souls of men, and preached with direct reference to their conversion. When he is about to die, God seems to remember with what peculiar zeal he thus served him, and how he seemed to say, on leaving the pastoral office for the missionary work, "As for me I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee;"—and accordingly the last act of his life is permitted to be a direct effort to save souls. He begins his exhortation in the cabin, when, lo! his voice catches the ear of one at a distance, who recognizes in it the voice of the pastor of his youth! It seems as though it were a testimony of remembrance with God of past faithfulness. That pastor's voice brought with it, to the mind of that esteemed survivor of the wreck, a throng of recol*lections* respecting his early and subsequent life. Members of

Christian congregations, young and old! if you should accidentally hear your pastor's voice amid the scenes of judgment, will the effect of it be joy or grief with you? That voice would recall scenes and impressions that would thrill you with pleasure, or make almost superfluous your dreadful sentence from your Judge.

He has gone to that great cloud of witnesses, who are above us and round about us. He has realized the anticipation of one of his predecessors—Mr. Evarts—expressed in that most striking exclamation upon his dying bed: "Oh! the face of God!" He has seen Christ, whom not having seen he loved. He has seen the multitude which no man can number, out of every nation and kindred and tongue and people. He has been welcomed by his predecessors in office, two of whom at least died like him, away from home, in the discharge of their official duties; Worcester among the Cherokees, and Cornelius at Hartford, Connecticut.* This work of missions fills up in the bodies of those who enter fully into its active labors among the churches at home, "that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ." Perils in the wilderness, and perils in the city, and perils in the sea, to say no more, must be the lot of those to whom is intrusted the work of inciting us to do our duty to the heathen.

But with our departed brother, all is rest, and peace, and reward. Among the redeemed I fancy that he looks with peculiar interest on the converts from heathenism. There are the bondmen of Africa, kings and priests unto God. In more than "barbaric pearl and gold" is the poor dweller by the Ganges and the Burrampooter. There the American Indian adores Him who is "more glorious and excellent than the mountain of prey." Kings' daughters, from the Sandwich Islands and Tahiti, are among the "honorable women." At Christ's right hand is that Madagascar queen. The oppressed mountaineer of Lebanon, the persecuted Armenian, are where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." The Persian worships a brighter Sun than that which rises on flowery Ispahan. The men of Burmah and Siam wonder for ever at the grace which raised them from their native debasement. Our brother felt himself a debtor to the Jew and the Greek; he sees them both there; and a sweeter savor to God than that "o'er Ceylon's isle," is he by whose efforts in part, salvation has been flowing forth to the Tamil people. The old Nestorian church has brought forth fruit in old age, some of which is gathered unto eternal life. The Chinese sees his wall of separation exchanged for a wall within which he walks with "the nations of them that are saved." To look on such a sight for one hour is an ample recompense for the toil and suffering by which that glory and bliss have been prepared. What, then, must eternity in heaven be?

* Mr. Evarts was, at the time of his death, in Charleston, South Carolina, having been for some time out of health.

Holy Ghost." the Holy Spirit "dwelleth in us," "bears witness with our spirit," gives us "liberty," "sheds abroad in our hearts with the love of God," is "the earnest of our inheritance." We are the "epistle of Christ, written with the Spirit," we are "changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." As well imagine that this edifice would retain its form, proportions, and strength, were the law of attraction to cease, or that by the sculptor's art life could be infused into the block of marble, as that without the Holy Spirit aught truly good would spring up in the human heart. As well think to preserve the inanimate corpse from ghastliness and decay and loathsomeness, as to keep him from whom God's Spirit has departed, from all spiritual wandering and darkness and wretchedness. But let us note more particularly some of the consequences of the withdrawal of the Spirit.

1. Deadness in ordinances. All ordinances are means of grace, but only means—of themselves they have no efficacy. Nay, without God's blessing they may even harden the heart. Transparencies, they were designed to be, through which God's glory shall shine into the soul. But without the Spirit's influence, they are transparencies no longer; they are opaque, shutting out the light. Follow one, who has grieved away the Holy Spirit, to his closet. He goes not promptly and joyfully, as to his best loved employment, into the presence of his dearest friend. He goes tardily, gloomily—driven by conscience. He has a sad sense of unfitness for closet duties; sin not thoroughly repented of weighs upon his spirit. He expects only—so has unbelief possessed him—to repeat once more the old round of formality; and he dreads to meet again, only to offend, his oft offended God and Saviour. But pray he must, after some sort; to renounce the duty altogether were to renounce all hope, even the poor, barren, selfish hope of escaping hell. He opens the Bible—he reads almost mechanically; it is a sealed book. Not as once does light gleam from every line; not as once does it fasten his attention and melt his heart. His mind wanders, anticipating the day's business at morning, and reviewing it at night; or, at the latter season, sinking into drowsiness. The reading of God's Word ended—perhaps cut short, a few verses sufficing—prayer follows, if prayer it may be called. Words without feeling—the same old forms of expression—no freshness, no gushing out of the heart—no subduing sense of God's presence—no casting of the soul's burdens upon God—no disposition, as in better days, to linger at the throne of grace! Vagrant thoughts are mingled with almost every petition—thoughts going out, as they are wont, after the absent heart. The prayer, too, is cut short; and almost the only pleasant feeling connected with it, is the feeling at the close, that the duty is done, that the demand of the stern taskmaster, conscience, has been once more met. No shining of the face after such a service; it is care-worn and guilt-worn still! Nor is it long, commonly, before a duty so irksome is often intermitted; and at length it wholly ceases, save on occasions, as conscience may need an opiate.

Much the same lifelessness is manifest in family devotion. This, too, is

a weariness. Little care is taken to have all the members of the family present. If once the Scripture read suggested often a word of instruction, or reproof, or warning, it is not so now. Whatever words of prayer are used, even the children, by that quick instinct which every spirit has to understand its fellow spirit, perceive that the power of prayer is lacking. They are inattentive and restless. Perhaps impatience is felt and manifested by him who leads in worship; and the whole service, instead of sustaining parental authority, diffusing peace over the family circle, and drawing down spiritual blessings, may even, by a strange perversion, exert the opposite influence. It is no wonder if it be soon discontinted.

Like things may be said of the church prayer-meeting. It has little attraction for the wanderer. A sprinkle of rain, or the prospect of it—a little snow—a little heat, or a little cold—a slight indisposition—an invitation to an evening party—an attractive public lecture or concert—a slight pressure of business—or a little fatigue when business is over—these, and like causes, keep him often from the place of prayer. And when there, he has no word of exhortation to utter, he seems to have scarcely anything in particular to pray for, and so, to the weariness of his brethren, he prays for everything. He prays too, in hackneyed phrase. There is no welling up of crystal waters from the deep fountains of the heart. His prayer is the most formal of all forms—an unwritten form.

Nor is it much otherwise in the sanctuary. He may be regular and punctual in his attendance, orderly and grave in his demeanor. He may in a manner be interested in the services. He may take note of the singing, if a man of musical taste—whether the tunes are well selected, how the parts are balanced, and how the voices sound on each, whether enunciation, time, and expression are good. He may be pleased with the manner or the substance of the preaching. But he seeks not, he finds not God in the sanctuary. The world follows him there, and is but feebly if at all repulsed. His heart goes not up with the song of praise, or the prayer; it responds not to the Scripture read. The truth unfolded he takes not home to his own bosom; it becomes not the food of his own soul. If he applies it at all, it is not to himself but to his neighbor. He goes from the sanctuary, unquickened, unrefreshed, unawakened, unblest.

2. Another evil resulting from the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit, and closely linked, both as cause and effect, with that just described, is increased worldliness. The heart must have some object. If in ordinances, and in its predominant affections, it rests not upon the Creator, it will inevitably fly to the creature. When surcharged with Divine influence, its inclination is heavenward, as the magnetized needle points to the pole:—"They that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit." But if the Spirit depart, it is left to the gravitating force of sin, and its tendency is ever downward. There is ample reason, then, for the complaint, "my soul cleaveth unto the dust." "They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh." The spirit of worldlyness becomes strangely subtle and irresistable. It steals in upon the heart through a thousand channels—even amidst home-scenes—in business the most lawful, and in

recreations the most innocent. Nor will the soml which has turned from its only satisfying portion, be likely to stop short of at least doubtful if not forbidden sources of enjoyment. Hence that making haste to be rich —that extragvagance in dress, and furniture, and architecture, and equipage—that resorting to amusements of a worldly character and tendency, so often seen among professing Christians; and from which cavillers take occasion to say, "what do ye more than others?"

3. Yet, I remark, thirdly, it is another evil of the state we are describing, that the soul is without comfort. True comfort, we mean, such as it pants after and must have, or be poor and wretched. The Holy Spirit is styled by Christ "the comforter." We are sinners, and this is a valley of tears, and of death; we need comfort, therefore, such as we can neither find in ourselves nor in earth—comfort just such as the Spirit gives. But let him be grieved away, and what joylessness ensues! The Christian's hope then declines; for it is the Spirit that witnesses to his adoption. He stands in doubt of himself—distressing doubt. He knows not whether to deem himself a child of God, or a child of the devil—on the way to glory, or to perdition. His view of the cross having grown dim, the burden of guilt is heavy upon him. His evil propensities gain strength, his easily besetting sins especially, and he is powerless to resist. The shield of faith gone, terrible, at times, are the fiery darts of the tempter. In his best hours there is an "aching void" within, a sad remembrance of joys departed. How comfortless he is in ordinances, we have already seen. And if he goes to the world for satisfaction, he finds it vanity; he cannot enjoy it as in the days of unregeneracy even, for God has taught him its emptiness. Its best, its most innocent pleasures leave a sting behind; they are to him unsanctified and idolatrous. From the cares and perplexities of business he finds not, as once, the closet a refuge. In disappointment, in bereavement—when his dwelling is desolate, and earth grows all dark around him —no comforts of God delight his soul. Go into a prayer-meeting, in a time of general religious declension, and what confirmation of these views will you find. No sweet experiences of God's favor uttered, no breathing forth of delight in God's truth, little dwelling on the higher privileges of God's children; but the talk and the praying are all of coldness, of sin, of doubt, of desertion, of God's frown. It is not the song of the pilgrim in the land of Beulah you hear, but the sad complaint of him who has lost his roll in the arbor of sloth and self-indulgence, or the groans and outcries of the prisoner of Giant Despair.

4. Another result of the Spirit's absence, is reluctance to labor in the cause of Christ. When "filled with the Spirit," the Christian has "a mind to work." The love of Christ constrains him, he has "continual sorrow and heaviness of heart," as he thinks of dying souls; and he cheerfully bears the cross, so that he may gain the crown. Labor, too, is easy. It is easy to speak for Christ, for it is out of the abundance of the heart. It is easy to make sacrifices, for he is bought with a price, and sacrifice with him is but another name for privilege. But let the Spirit depart, and all how changed! He has no heart to warn sinners, and so he multiplies

excuses. He lacks time, or he lacks ability, or the convenient time is not yet. The fear of man possesses him; he is not bold as formerly, but a very coward in the presence of the Anaks of impenitency. He is full of unbelief and despondency; all he could say, he fears, would do little good. Sometimes he seeks to soothe his conscience by a great show of conservatism. He is afraid of rashness and fanaticism, of a blind and headlong zeal. For fear of leaning to man's inventions, he neglects God's plain commandments. Due precaution against an unintelligent and unprofitable excitement is certainly commendable. Yet it is worthy of note, that such precaution is often most abundant when there is the least possible excitement in the church—when it is all like a stagnant lake, scarce a breath of the Spirit ruffling its surface. False zeal, indeed, is to be deprecated; still "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." And God has said, "because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot I will spew thee out of my mouth."

With the cessation of other activity, comes the decline of benevolence, and from the same cause. When Christians are spiritual, "the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounds unto the riches of their liberality." But not so when the Spirit is withdrawn. An increased amount of their means is absorbed in expenditures resulting from increased worldliness—from "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." Covetousness gains ground, a desire of hoarding, and a reluctance to part with money. The habit of withholding is gradually formed, and so the treasury of the Lord becomes lean, fields of benevolent enterprise already entered, are but poorly cultivated, opening fields are neglected, and all the wheels of evangelism move heavily; while the riches of the Church "are corrupted," her "garments are moth-eaten," her gold and her silver "is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness" against her.

5. Another sad result of the withdrawal of the Spirit, is dissension among brethren. Brotherly love is one of the chief fruits of the Spirit, manifesting itself in all gentleness, meekness, disinterestedness, and forbearance. We are commanded to "keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God," says the Apostle Paul, "whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption; let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." Not only may the evils here mentioned be the means of grieving the Spirit, but they are in greater abundance the result. Unkind thoughts arise between individuals—surmises, jealousies, misapprehensions—all springing, at first, perhaps, out of trifles, but growing speedily into an open feud. Parties are formed in the Church. In regard even to the decline of religion, there may be, not godly sorrow, not self-inspection, and self-humiliation, but mutual crimination and re-crimination. Churches are riven, Pastors and their people separated. The ministers of Christ, instead of seeing eye to eye, become divided, and spend in party war are the

strength that should be given to the saving of souls. Jealousies and suspicions are set afloat and entertained in regard to the great benevolent institutions of the day. Everywhere in the Church, you may see brother looking distrustfully at brother; and amid secret alienations, and open strifes, that grand proof of Christianity, the essential oneness of the Church seems almost extinct; and instead of the world's saying, as of old, "behold how these Christians love each other," their cry is, "behold how they bite and devour one another."

6. To all this we add, the abounding of error and apostacy. God's Spirit is the Spirit of truth. He revealed the Truth—he opens the eyes of his people to see it—he keeps their hearts and minds "in the truth." If he depart, what can be looked for, but the incoming of error? The heart is then prepared for error; and if not at once, yet sooner or later, it will steal in. It will come in specious shapes and guises, so as to deceive, if possible the very elect. As some ingenious, but false speculation, some philanthropic theory, essentially infidel, some new casting of an old doctrine, under the fair pretence of progress in theology; some grand simplification, or some amazing profundity, something enlarged and liberal, some rubbing off of the rough corners of Calvanism, regeneration made plain, conversion made easy, religion modernized, telegraphed, put upon the railroad, adapted to the spirit of the age. Encroachment at first will be comparatively trifling, it will be gradual and subtle, until the foundations are destroyed. Seek you facts in confirmation of these views. Look for a notable one to Germany. Whence came her cold, soul-destroying, neology? Let one of her own sons answer, "From dead orthodoxy."

Scandalous practices may not at first abound in the Church; the force of habit may prevent. The car may move awhile on the track after the motive power has ceased. But as surely as all restraint upon indwelling sin comes of the Holy Spirit, so surely, if the Spirit depart, will it break out at length into gross iniquity; and trying cases of discipline will be multiplied, until, perhaps, in the deadness of the Church, the hand of discipline, shall be paralyzed.

7. Not the least of the evils which come of grieving away the Spirit, is the ruin of souls. The church is the "pillar and ground of the truth;" in some sense, the channel through which divine influence flows to the lost. If the Spirit leaves the Churchhe leaves the world. "If the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me, how then shall Pharaoh hear me?" Even in the incipient withdrawal of the Spirit, such as we now witness, how unbroken are the ranks of the ungodly! Let your eyes, my brethren, affect your hearts. Behold the impenitent in your families; there is scarce a house among us in which there is not at least one dead. See them in the congregation, and around you; both frequenters and neglecters of the sanctuary, hastening on by thousands and by tens of thousands, to the world of woe. Remember, as you look, that the main reason why these friends, and fellow-hearers, and fellow-citizens are unawakened and unblest is, that the Spirit has departed from the Church; that her individua members, that you, have grieved him away. Remember, that as without

the Holy Spirit, they will never repent; and as He abides primarily in the Church, and is by the Church, if at all, to be invoked upon the unconverted; the question whether they are to be saved or lost, turns upon that other question, will the Church, will you, be brought to realize the evil of the Spirit's absence, and to pray and act accordingly?

8. Finally, to make the picture we draw complete, yet another shade must be added: the influence of the state of things described upon the younger members of the Church. It is in some respects peculiar. Many of the older members have formed their Christian character in better times, when the general tone of spirituality was high. Some of them, perhaps, through the habit of close walking with God, early established, and strengthened by many years of holy living, may be kept, even amidst general declension, "as a watered garden, and as a spring whose waters fail not." There are commonly "a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." But what shall become of the lambs? How are they to be trained? What will be the almost inevitable influence of the general example upon them? Their characters at the forming period, they accustomed to be led rather than to lead, looking up to their elders in the Christian life with respect and confidence, and having still hearts prone to depart from the living God, what sort of Christians will they become, if even the present absence of the Spirit's influence shall continue? What manner of persons will take our places, when these heads, some of them now whitening for the grave, shall be laid there? To whom shall we bequeath the precious truths and institutions we now hold in trust? What sort of warriors are we training to fight, when our warfare is over, the good fight of faith, to take part in the mighty conflict, already begun, for the world's salvation? The absence of the Spirit from us, is not our loss alone, or the loss of the impenitent connected with us; it is the loss of the church that shall live after us, of the perishing souls around her, and of the world at large, whose salvation shall be helped or hindered by her faithfulness or unfaithfulness.

Such, my brethren, are some of the reasons, why we should, like David, deprecate the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit. It leads to deadness in ordinances, to increased worldliness, to destitution of comfort, to reluctance to labor and to give for Christ, to dissension among brethren, to error and apostacy, to the ruin of souls, and to the deterioration of character in the rising generation of Christians. All these evils, as we have already intimated, appear not in their fullness at once. But come they will, gradually, in a natural and sure course, if the absence of the Spirit continue. Can you not now perceive their incipient manifestations? Have I drawn a fancy sketch; or do your own eyes behold, in some measure, the sad originals? And is there not enough in what we now see, and have reason to fear, to call forth from us the prayer, Take not thy Holy Spirit from us. Restore unto us, unto the whole Church, the joy of thy salvation, and uphold us with thy free Spirit.

II. But we were to show, in the second place, how we should deprecate

the Spirit's absence. We may ask and receive not, because we ask amiss. Action must correspond with prayer: it must be an echo of the prayer, or that will be unavailing. Yet I need not greatly enlarge on this head. If our need of the Spirit be truly and deeply felt, it can hardly fail to call forth the right kind of prayer. It may be briefly remarked, however:

1. We should pray with self-examination. If the Spirit be absent from the church, he is absent from individuals. If absent, he has, as we have all along taken for granted, and as the Scriptures abundantly show, been grieved away. Individuals have grieved him. We should not, then, by a vague, general imputation, cast the guilt upon the Church, nor yet upon our individual brethren; but each ask for himself, how have I grieved the Spirit? What iniquities of mine have separated between me and my God? What is there in my heart, my speech, my aims, my habits, my domestic life, my business walks my secular or holy things, inconsistent with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Diligently, faithfully, impartially, should we scrutinize ourselves, and pray as we do it, "Search me, oh God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

2. We should utter the prayer of the text with penitence. Not only must we see, we must hate and renounce the sins which have grieved the Spirit. Else seeing will only deepen our guilt. No matter though our sins be as the right hand or the right eye, we must part with them. And we must renounce them, not merely because they have brought sorrow on our souls, and threaten greater, but because they are sins, exceeding sinful, sins against God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit— a Christian's sins—sins against light, and love, and solemn resolves, and a covenant sealed with blood, sins fitted to ruin other souls, and bring dishonor upon the Savior's name.

3. I add only, we should utter the prayer of the text, with hope. "The Lord taketh pleasure in those that hope in his mercy." "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that religiously seek him." "Return unto me," he says, "and I will return unto you." "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely." As to his readiness to give the Holy Spirit, there is a most explicit and wonderful declaration:—"If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" If straightened at all, it is in ourselves, not in him. Let us pray then with hope. It is a good sign if he stir us up to pray. Will he not give us the blessing he prompts us to ask? Seeing our sins—not excusing, but bewailing and forsaking—realizing the preciousness of the blessing we ask, and the evils of its absence—taking encouragement from God's character and promises, and coming only in the name of Christ—Let us cry here, in our closets, in our families, in the prayer-meeting, in the frequent ejaculation of our hearts—let us cry perseveringly—"Take not thy Holy Spirit from us."

SERMON CCCCXL.

BY REV. REUBEN TINKER,

WESTFIELD, N. Y.

THE PENITENT THIEF.

Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.—LUKE XXIII. 42.

THE scenes of Calvary should be in our daily and everlasting remembrance. For how can the branches flourish forgetful of the vine; or the stones of a temple rest unmindful of their foundation? And can a wandering and lost sinner go a day's journey without looking to the Cross where was hung the light and salvation of the world? Could we, however, for a moment forget our own personal interest in the dying of the Lord Jesus, there is in the event itself, and in circumstances attending it, an interest unparalleled in the history of the earth.

In the early morning of that ever memorable day, the people were flocking and settling like a cloud on the head and sides of the mountain, to attend "this troubled feast of death." And as the MAN OF SORROWS came slowly bearing his Cross up the hill, unutterable emotions must have been awakened in every heart. For the Doctors saw there the man who, twenty-one years before, had astonished them with his understanding and answers; and the traders in the temple saw there the man who had driven them out and overturned their tables; and the visitors from Gadura saw there the man by whom, as they thought, they had lost their herd in the sea. The lawyers and Priests, the Pharisees and Scribes saw in him the man who had exposed their hypocrisy, denominated them a generation of serpents, whited sepulchres, children of their father, the devil, and candidates for the damnation of hell. Men also were there to see him faint, by whom they had been so miraculously strengthened with food; the daughters of Jerusalem came to bewail him who needed their tears less than they were needed for themselves and their children; and children came to see nailed to the wood, arms in which they had been taken and blessed. A group of spectators, once palsied and maimed, came to behold him mangled, by whom they were restored to perfect soundness; and men, once blind, came to see his eyes closed in death from whom they had received the blessing of vision. Tell us, Martha and Mary, as ye stand there supported by that brother who had been dead four days; and thou widow of Nain, sus-

tained by that son who sat up and began to speak when Jesus met the bier at the gate,—tell us, what are your emotions to see him who is the resurrection and the life, on his way to the tomb? And thou, blessed among women—but we ask not after a mother's anguish—this is that spoken of by the venerable Simeon when he said, "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also."

Behold this august sufferer on the cross! The earth is quaking, the rocks are rending, dead saints are rising, and the black heavens do thunder like an angel speaking. "Ill wast thou shrouded then, O patient Son of God." Are James and John drinking of the cup mingled for their Lord? Is Peter following him to prison and to death? No, he is treading the wine press alone, and of the people there is none with him—only on either side a thief. The rabble wag their heads and rail, "Ah, thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself and come down from the cross." The scribes and priests mock, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." Jesus prays, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." One malefactor reviles, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." The other entreats, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The Saviour cries, "It is finished." The centurion confesses, "Truly, this was the Son of God." And the people, who had witnessed the amazing sight, smote on their breasts and returned.

Such was the crucifixion on Calvary; not to be forgotten by those who witnessed it—nor must it be forgotten by us who read and hear it. And while every part is full of interest and worthy of contemplation, the time will allow us at present only to look at the Saviour and the man whom he saved—the theif who was that day "caught up into Paradise."

1. LORD, remember me. Whom does he call *Lord?* The Babe of Bethlehem and of the manger; the Child hunted by Herod; the Son of the carpenter; the wandering, homeless Galilean; the object of envy and of hate; the despised Nazarene. It was a Man betrayed and denied by his own family; forsaken by his friends in his last trial, and forsaken of his God in his last conflict. He was one nailed to the wood, as the most vile, and worthless, and execrable object in all Judea. Will you, crucified thief, make account of such an one? Can he help thee? Is not praying to him adding to thy sins? Dost thou call him Lord? Yes, it is well; it is no mistake; it is the Lord of heaven and earth; the Maker, Preserver, Redeemer, and Judge of Mankind; before whom we must shortly stand to receive our eternal reward. Are we prepared to meet him?

2. Lord REMEMBER me. How *remember*? Not his follies, not his crimes, but his wants on the verge of the grave and eternity. He wished to be remembered with the favor which God bears to his people. What is it to remember with favor? Ask that mother who watches with a sick child, till, exhausted, she sinks to sleep, and immediately wakes again to see if all is still, and the remedies properly administered, and then sleeps again, only to dream of her darling's recovery or death. She can tell you what it is to remember. And that other woman, who lies waking during the stormy night, and praying to God who rules the ocean, that he would preserve her sailor boy, who may be tossing in the perils of the deep. She can tell what it is to remember with favor, for her affection and her fears render her breast as tumultuous as the sea. And many a widow can tell you, whose tears in summer refresh the sod on *his* grave, and gems the marble slab in the frosts of winter. Such is the remembrance for which the thief prayed, the kind and constant regard of his heart, whose favor is life and whose loving kindness is better than life. But will the eternal God thus remember mortals? Hear. Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." Zion's God replied, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

3. Lord, remember *me*. Who is this *me*, that he should ask a place in the memory of Immanuel? The Bible gives no account of his life, only that he was an evil doer, and died a penitent. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." He was essentially like us, "sold under sin." He had, it may be presumed, fewer religious advantages and wholesome restraints. Perhaps he had not a praying mother to teach him the fear of the Lord, as we had, or may have yet; No pious father's example and counsel, as we had, or may have yet. His character warrants the presumption that he did not reverence the Sabbath, nor read the Scriptures, nor attend divine worship; that he had no closet for prayer, and no Sabbath-school nor Bible-class instruction. It is not improbable that his parents were irreligious in their feelings, conduct, and conversation; and that the statutes, the Sabbath, the worship, ordinances, and people of God were disesteemed by them, and hence by their son. Temptations to sin were, it is likely, multiplied about his path, so that he sat in the seat of the scorner, and went with her whose steps take hold on hell. It is not strange that he was ruined. For, parents, the children committed to your care may be as well tempered as any since the Fall; and you may have them baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity; you may

store their minds with sacred texts and divine hymns; you may take them to your closet, and cause them to kneel by your side, and lay your hand on their head while you pray; you may warn, and entreat, and persuade, ten thousand times, with a heart full, even to tears; you may place them in the care of devoted teachers; and, having done this, send them from you to some other village or country, with a Bible in their trunk, and a letter of advice in their pocket, and accompany them with your supplications, and send after them serious and heavenly messages by almost every mail; and, after all, you must either be ignorant of the world they are in, or grow indifferent to their welfare, or feel an unwonted confidence in the oversight which a covenant-keeping God will take of them, else you will lie awake till midnight through apprehension that your son would become a Barabas, and your daughter a Mary Magdalene! Still, after all this fidelity on your part—the Lord grant it may not be less than has been supposed—there is ground of hope that your sons will be as olive plants, and your daughters as polished stones, but this hope is not founded on their goodness nor on yours, but on the covenant of a faithful God showing mercy to thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments. It is no wonder that the thief was ruined; presuming, as we may, that he was a neglected, spoiled child. And that he was so, is easy to be believed from our acquaintance with men like him. For, some time since, it was my lot to spend a portion of the Sabbath, for three years, in the instruction of prisoners: and they were, as far as could be ascertained, generally men whose religious education was much, if not entirely, neglected in their youth.

Let us now return from this digression to the dying malefactor. He had broken the law, had received a most ignominious sentence, and was suffering its execution. How many times he had transgressed, we know not; how much he had suffered from the stings of a guilty conscience, we know not; how many hearts of friends his conduct had riven, how many hopes blasted, is not in the record; but one thing, worth more to him than the universe, we do find there, namely, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy Kingdom."

WHEN THOU COMEST INTO THY KINGDOM! He set a time. We should expect to hear him say as his companion did, "If thou be the Christ save thyself and us; thou art in the same condemnation; remember us, therefere, while hanging here, ease our pains; let us go down from these crosses." But of this he says nothing. He has a larger request; so large, one would think he had met with that text, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." Else how could he imagine that the

Son of God would be mindful of him just at the moment of completing the great work of redemption on which the eyes of heaven and hell had been so intently fixed, and returning home to his Father's house and bosom, escorted by the twenty thousand chariots of God and twelve legions of angels, and overwhelmed with hallelujahs and hosannas, as the everlasting gates lifted up their heads that the King of glory might come in. How, amidst this throng, this joy, and the unnumbered recollections which came like a flood into the Redeemer's soul, could he, a poor, wretched, despicable and guilty thief think to be, and pray to be, remembered at such a moment, by such a personage—a personage in whose sight whole nations are dust? It would seem to be unparalleled presumption, and yet it was not presuming too far, for his stained soul was washed white in the blood then falling from Immanuel's veins, the angels sung Heaven's anthem for a penitent sinner; and that same sinner went that same afternoon to the realms of the blessed, whither Jesus himself had just gone; and there he was welcome, and there he has been welcome for more than eighteen hundred years, a king and a priest unto God, not for an instant forgotten by his Saviour amidst the multiplied cares of a universe whose government rests on his shoulders! Oh! the compassion of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Let us now for one moment glance at the ground we have gone over. In the first place, we found the transactions of Calvary interesting beyond all parallel. In the second, we found the penitent thief was not guilty of idolatry in praying to his fellow-sufferer, the Lamb who was slain, because he was that wonderful being, "God manifest in the flesh." In the third place, we found that the remembrance for which the dying malefactor petitioned, though a great favor, was not too much to be expected from Him who came into the world to save sinners, even the chief. In the fourth place, we supposed this criminal's moral and religious education to have been defective, both because such is the fact with that class of persons in our day, and because, too, God is pleased to crown the fidelity of parents with his blessing. In the last place, we spoke of the return of Christ's spirit to Heaven, and of the thief's departure a short time after; and there they have been, and there they are now, and there they ever shall be, world without end. Who of us would not be there also? That we may be prepared at length to join them, allow me to remark,

1. We cannot be saved without a knowledge of Christ crucified. The thief's soul had been lost if he had not met with the Saviour at the place of execution, or had not in

some way been led to an acquaintance with him who was "lifted up." The immortals in this land, who know little or nothing of Jesus, are in extreme danger of perishing; and the millions of heathen are in a darkness that may be felt. "Arise, O Sun of Righteousness, arise."

2. We must have faith in Christ's ability and willingness to save, and feel our need of his almighty help. The multitudes on Calvary had opportunity to be acquainted with Christ's character and their own, but they did not believe, and were not saved. The thief believed and was saved. We have often heard of Jesus. Do we believe in Him? If not, we are on the verge of perdition; for he that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him.

3. Jesus saves the humble and penitent, however great may be their guilt. He came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance; he came to seek and save the lost. His blood is a fountain which cleanses from all sin.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away;"

for "this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

"Dear dying Lamb! thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved, to sin no more."

4. The thief is the only instance in the Bible of conversion at the hour of death, that none should despair, and that none should presume.

5. God is a sovereign. One thief was taken, the other left. And what if he save some of you and leave others to perish? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

6. The last remark is, men err in their efforts to be remembered or immortalized. So universal and strong is the desire of being remembered, that God employs it as a motive to a righteous life, when he says, "the just shall be in everlasting remembrance." For it pains us to believe that in a few years the wave of oblivion will roll over our memory and leave not a wreck behind. Hence youth circulate their place-books to give and receive memorials of each other. May I ask my young friends, are your names in the book of God's remembrance, and do you wish them written there? We write our names in the Family Bible that they may be

handed down to the millennial day; but turn first to the twenty-third chapter of Luke, the forty-second verse. Have we adopted and offered as our own that prayer, "Lord remember me!" Are your names enrolled in the Family Register of Heaven; and do we wish them written there? And you, who obtain the portrait or miniature of your friend, that it may be hung in your hall or worn at your heart, tell me do you carry the image and likeness of God in your heart, and is your name engraven on the palms of his hands? And to those who are ambitious of numerous acquaintances and friends, that their memory may fill a large place, let me say, one friend is enough if that be friend God; and for the truth of this I appeal to the glorified thief; was not that one Friend of yours enough for you? Hearer, have you such a friend? And have you not seen mortals lying on a bed from which they never arose, give to the dear ones weeping around them some keepsake, with the injunction, "Remember me?" But do you recollect whether they committed their soul to Christ with the prayer, "Lord remember me." One writes a ode, or plants a tree, or erects a pillar, or builds a city, for a memorial, but praying for no remembrance in Heaven, his name is neither in the book of life, nor on the tree of life, nor on any pillar or wall in the city of life. My friends, are yours there? Those who would be remembered for ever must be good. Let them espouse the cause of the poor, the neglected, the oppressed and the dying. Jesus secured for himself an eternal weight of glory in giving his labors and his blood for the salvation of the lost; and the disciples who in this resemble their Master shall be with him to behold and reflect his glory through infinity and to all eternity.

Have we, permit me to ask again, offered the prayer of the thief? We are sinners as well as he; do we pray as well? Have we been sensible of our guilt and danger? Has the plague of our hearts been seen and lamented; have the terrors of the Lord taken hold of us, and the arrows of the Almighty drunk up our spirits? In our distress have we prayed to him and found pardon and peace? Those who are prayerless now while on earth, may desire hereafter that God would forget them. He does not, however, forget even his enemies; his eye is, and will be, on them, his voice will terrify them, and his hand fill the cup of their woe to overflowing, as they are dashed on the rocks of dark damnation. God remembers those who forget him.

Let it be our daily prayer that the Lord would remember us in mercy and in our every need. When we walk in darkness and see no light; when temptations from without assail us like a tempest, and our corruptions within rage like a storm; when we tread on thorns and the old serpent wraps

his folds around us, Lord, remember us, then, for thou wast thyself tempted and art able to succor. When our friends betray and forsake us, and those most dear are dying and dead; when we are homeless strangers in a strange land; when our garments wax old, and the last of our oil and meal are mingled, and the sticks gathered to bake it, that we may eat it and die; Lord, remember us, then, for thou wast thyself the homeless, destitute, and forsaken Man of Sorrows. And when we reach the end of life's journey, when death meets us on his pale horse, and presses his cold hand on our hearts till they can beat no longer, and our bodies return to the clay, and our spirits to God who gave them, O, Lord, remember us then in that trying hour, for thou wast thyself "cut off out of the land of the living." And when that morn rises in which the sleep of the dead is broken by the archangel's trumpet, and the funeral knell of this world is tolling on the shores of eternity; when we stand before the great white throne subjected, for every action, word and thought, to the searching eye of the omniscient and holy God, and the assembled nations tremble to hear the dread decision which consigns them each to Heaven or Hell; then, O Lord, remember thy unworthy servants with the favor which said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

SERMON CCCCXLI.

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OBEDIENCE.

Children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise. That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—Eph. vi., 1—4.

Right and obligation correspond to each other. If children are under obligation to obey, it is the right as well as the duty of parents to command. The text enjoins the duty of obedience. Parents are directed to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The admonition of the Lord, is such instruction and reproof as is agreeable to the divine will. The nuture of the Lord is that discipline or government which the Lord requires.

Before giving reasons why parents should exact, and children render, obedience, I will notice three preliminary questions:

1. On whom is this duty of requiring obedience binding?

The text makes it binding on parents; and if on them, by implication, it is binding on teachers, masters, guardians, and all such as for the time being occupy the place of parents. If the duty of obedience is binding on children, it is binding on scholars, apprentices, wards, and all such as are in the places of children. Hence the direction of the text is to all who should command or obey.

2. When and how far is the duty of the text binding?

Have parents a right to command *everything*, and must children always obey? The text contains the only necessary qualification to its commands. It directs children to obey their parents *in the Lord*, and parents to bring up their children in the discipline *of the Lord*. The qualifications *in the Lord* and *of the Lord*, show that such commands must be given and obeyed as the Lord approves. Should a parent be wicked enough to order a child to steal, kill, or use profane language, it would be against a higher command, and therefore null and void. The parent has no right to give, and the child no right to obey, such a command. With the exception of orders directly contrary to those of God, it is not left to the discretion of children when and how far they shall obey. The Apostle in Colossians says: Children obey your parents in all things—small things and great things, agreeable things and disagreeable things. God has committed it to the understanding of parents and not that of children, to select what they shall do. The parent is made responsible for the conduct of his children in such a sense that he sins if he does not exact obedience in what they ought to do. It is an ordinance of God that the taste and judgment of children should yield to the decision of parents as to what is best for them to do or not to do.

3. How long must the term of obedience continue?

The civil law says twenty-one years. This is founded on the belief that at this age the mind is sufficiently matured, and the principles of common sense sufficiently developed for self-government. When the youth between twelve and twenty, at any time wishes to break from restraint, feeling fully competent for self government, parental control is much more needed than in earlier childhood. Now, of all other times, perfect obedience should be required. When he knows enough to distrust his own capacity, he is becoming capable of self-government. Parents should govern till children no longer need control, and children should obey till they have no longer a disposition to disobey, and then they may be safely trusted to govern themselves.

I. One reason for obedience is the command of God.

Infinite Wisdom has made children more helpless than the young of other creatures. This makes parental authority necessary and easy, and affords time for parents to carry out the plans, and children to learn the habits of obedience. The fifth command directs, Honor thy father and thy moth-

er. The text says, Children obey your parents in the Lord. And the Apostle to the Colossians, says, Children obey your parents in all things. Had God spoken so plain a precept but once, it would seem sufficient. But to confirm the matter beyond all doubt, it is repeated at least three times. If any one asks, Why must I obey my parents? The answer is, Because God says you must. If any ask, Why must I govern my children? The answer is, Because God requires you to bring them up in the discipline of the Lord. These Scriptures completely establish the duty of obedience; and here I might end the discourse, if men would be governed by, Thus saith the Lord.

II. Another reason for obedience is justice.

The text affirms that obedience *is right*, in the original—"*dikaion*"—just. Parents have done enough for their children to make their obedience, at least, required by justice. What child will ever be able to repay the care, toil and affection of his parents? Can he do less than to obey? The child who is disposed to disobey, should ask himself, Where did I get my breakfast this morning? Who gave me my clothing and a thousand other blessings? Who prayed for me, rocked me in infancy, watched over me in sickness, and hung over me with a solicitude which could not be hired? The disobedient are dishonest, taking from parents what justly belongs to them. It is base ingratitude to disobey those who have given us reputation, education, and, under God, made us all that we are.

III. Obedience is praiseworthy.

The Hottentot proves his majority by being able to whip his mother. Like him I have seen children who thought it "smart" to disobey their mother. They were too stupid to know that disobedience arises from ignorance and a want of good sense. Parents suffer, in our estimation, when we find they cannot govern their children! And their children suffer still more. On the other hand, what is more praiseworthy in both parents and children than prompt obedience? A poet has immortalized the lad who, even when the ship was on fire, would not leave his post without liberty from his father.

IV. The wisdom of age and ages approve of obedience.

Aged persons, who were once guilty of disobedience, now look upon it with regret, and review no part of their life with more pain. The wise regard it as a great blessing that they were made to obey. The ancients required respect to age. Young Greeks rose on the approach of the aged. The Levitical law required the young to rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man. Respect and obedience go together. Cato, the wisest of his nation, wished Roman youth to turn red, but never pale. He would have them redden before those whom they should obey, but never *be afraid to do* what they were commanded. The spirit of

this maxim pervading the community made Rome what it was. Abraham was the wisest of the patriarchs. God gave this as a reason why his family should be distinguished and why he should be told of the destruction of Sodom. For I know him that will *command* his children and his household after him. His family government not only made his posterity celebrated, but made him the friend of God. Contrast the wisdom of Abraham with the folly of Eli, who, instead of exacting obedience of his children, merely reproved them, saying, why *do ye* such things? God said, I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not. Infinite Wisdom made a great distinction between Abraham and Eli, and their families, because of the difference in family government.

Solomon was the wisest man that ever was or ever will be. God said, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like unto thee, before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. This wisest of men says, My son, keep thy father's commandments, and forsake not the law of thy mother. Bind them continually upon thy heart, and tie them about thy neck. He would have them be as careful to obey as they were to bind a likeness or charm to their hearts and their necks. The Rechabites afford a beautiful illustration of obedience. The prophet says, I set before them pots full of wine, and cups, and said, drink ye wine. But they said, we will drink no wine; for Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, ye shall drink no wine. Not for temperance principles, but for obedience to their father, the prophet pronounces this blessing on the family. Thus saith the Lord: because ye have obeyed the commandments of Jonadab, your father, therefore, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.

Jesus of Nazareth left a more beautiful example than any of these. But one incident of his life is related from his infancy till he began to be about thirty years of age, and inspiration spared that for an example of filial obedience. Having never sinned, he was able at twelve to astonish the learned doctors at his understanding and answers. He returned to Nazareth with his parents, and was subject unto them. Children, twelve or fifteen years of age, often think that they know too much to obey their parents, especially their mother. Yet Jesus, knowing more than the doctors of the law, was subject unto his parents, setting an example to be followed in all ages.

V. The advantages of obedience.

Children often think their obedience is mostly advantageous to their parents. It is, indeed, valuable to them, but ten times more so to their children.

1. One advantage of obedience is, that it teaches men to govern.

He who will well reign, must first well serve. Parents wish their children, at a future day, to have capacity to govern a State, a school, or, at least, a family. All are born to reign in a republic. He who has never been governed himself, lacks capacity to govern others. The philosophy of this is, that the first step towards making a good governor is to govern self. He whose will has never been broken and made obedient, cannot control his passions and is destitute of that order and balance of mind which is necessary to govern others. He who has discharged the duties of every inferior station, knows what should be expected of them, and by what means every man may be controlled. The secret of success in war and many other things, is good discipline, which is a patent that men must have stolen from Heaven and applied to their own purposes. It was this which made Rome and other powers each in her turn the mistress of the world. China, in spite of her dread of improvements, has long stood a powerful empire. One secret of her stability is, that her higher offices must be filled by men who have served in sixteen subordinate grades. It has for a thousand years been almost a miracle to mankind that Romish priests who have been held together by such an assemblage of absurdities, are so successful in governing mind. Look into the institutions where these men are trained, and every step is absolute obedience from childhood till they are prepared to govern. While Rome pagan and Rome papal have been the most awful scourges of mankind, they show us how obedience teaches to govern. Bonaparte knew too much to trust a man in a responsible station, before he had first learned obedience in subordinate stations. The sun never sets on the empire of Queen Victoria. This has resulted from the wisdom of Parliament. When a man gets into the House of Lords, he wishes his son to come there with a capacity to govern the world. Hence, tutors are employed to exact the lessons and obedience preparatory to such responsibilities. The literary institutions of Granville, Ohio, never had a better governor than Mr. Martin, who was for five years principal of the male academy. When he came to die the paroxysms of disease were so violent that he had his senses only at intervals. The last time his reason returned, he asked to see his two little children. His wife bringing them inquired "Have you any directions to give concerning the children?" He replied: "Whatever else you teach them, teach them *submission*—submission to God, and submission to yourself." He spoke not again, and no dying man ever expressed more in his last words.

A distinguished foreigner landing at one of our ports, heard that the mother of Washington was at a hotel. Gaining access to her, he ventured to ask her a question which he thought would take as long to answer as would be suitable for him to remain in the presence of such a personage. The

question was, How did you train your son to make him such a man? She made the answer as short as the question. "I taught him the lesson of obedience." This should be taught all who would command like Washington.

2. Obedience makes useful men.

Abraham was efficient in forming the character of the Israelites by commanding his children and his household after him. The men whom God selected from all the world to receive the first dispensation, had well learned obedience under Egyptian task-makers. When Christ was born the temple of Janus was shut because the world being reduced to obedience to Rome, was at peace. Without comparing Roman or Egyptian servitude with Christian family government, we have the facts, that previous to the giving of the law and the spread of the Gospel, the recipients of these favors had learned obedience. Some have thought that the strict government of children breaks the spirit, prevents future independence and courage. This is answered in the history of the Spartans, the heroes of '76. Martin Luther, and all who have been trained under wholesome discipline. Let us see, in a few examples, how God trains men for stations of usefulness. Jacob was to be a useful man, the father of twelve sons, who were to stand at the head of the twelve tribes of Israel. He grew up indulged by his mother and with so little respect for his father that he imposed on him in obtaining the blessing. God saw that this was not the way to make the man required, and by his providence he was sent away three hundred miles, to serve twenty years under a severe master who changed his wages ten times. He returned a sterling man; able to pacify Esau, wrestle with an angel, and do anything required of a venerable patriarch. God designed to make Joseph the Lord of Egypt, who should contribute much to the divine glory. Though pious at the age of seventeen, he was in peril of injury by an indulgence arising from his being loved more than all his brethren. To save him from this, he was sold into Egypt, and to become the best man there to inculcate obedience. As soon as the virtues of Joseph procured him favor, he was thrown into prison and returned to a condition of rigid obedience. Having thirteen years learned obedience, he was prepared for the station assigned. At a later period, God looked forward eighty years, when a man of consummate wisdom would be wanted to lead out a nation of bondmen, and prepare them for Canaan. He doubtless had the prayers and instructions of his parents, grew up in the house of Pharoah, and was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Knowing that that he should lead out Israel, he felt competent to the task, proceeded to kill the Egyptian who did the wrong. But God saw that he *lacked one thing yet*. To obtain this, he was sent into Midian to be a servant forty years. Though he fell in his own estimation, God now saw that he was armed at all points.

The tender parent, whose pitying eye spares wholesome discipline, should recollect that He, who, as a father, pitieth his children, and keeps them as the apple of his eye, rather than have them lose such a boon, will expose them to the cruelties of the Padan, Aram, Egypt and Midian. Even the man Christ Jesus, though without sin, while preparing for the work of redemption, was obedient to the law, being *subject unto* his parents. Luther says, "my parents treated me cruelly: one day, for a mere trifle, my mother whipped me till the blood came." His biographer says, "At school, the poor child was treated with equal severity. His master flogged him fifteen times in one day." Without countenancing these things, we have the fact that he was inured to rigid obedience, and instead of destroying his courage, he became one of the most dauntless men of his age, and not only went to Worms in spite of as many devils as there were tiles on the houses, but, like a lion, he broke off one half the power of Rome. Obedience had much to do in forming the character of the Pilgrims.

3. Obedience to parents lays the foundation of obedience to all lawful authority.

There is a sense in which all are equally obedient. All obey something; either reason, interest, conscience, or some other lawful authority; or else they obey passion, vice, the mob, or some other unlawful authority. The kind of authority men are early accustomed to obey settles their future destiny. Obedience is so much a matter of habit, that family government is the foundation of all government. It will, in other places, be what it has been at home. Men may be expected to treat others as they do their parents; whether it be uncourteous, unkind, or the contrary.

He who will not obey his parents, may never be expected to obey any law which he ought to obey, either within, or without himself. Excessive indulgence has been pleaded on the ground that it will bring a return of indulgence in old age.

Parents! Govern your children now, and you will give them the elements of patience, respect and kindness, when you are old. Bet let them now govern you, and they always will, and when you are old, with a rod of iron. The aged never fall into such unfeeling hands as those who have grown up without respect to parental authority. The disturbers of the school were never governed at home. Thousands never bent their wills in the nursery, and they know not how to do it in the Church. They must there be flattered and "petted," or they will break their covenant with God and go to some wild "ism" of the day. Formerly, when offended, they ran behind the door; now the same temper carries them into another ecclesiastical connection.

If all children were brought up in the discipline of the *Lord, laws* would scarcely need a penalty. The virtue of

obedience always ranked high among intelligent heathen. Fighting beyond and contrary to orders, seven hundred of Cæsar's men were killed. Assembling the survivors, he told them that "modesty and obedience are better than magnanimity of soul." When family government is entirely prostrate, bayonets, and not laws, must keep order. Criminals are increasing from ungoverned families. The parents of young Crowningshield, who murdered a venerable citizen of Salem, ordered his teacher never to correct him. A man acquainted with Spencer, who was hung on board the Somers, says, "he was always disobedient to his parents." The biographer of Arnold says, "he was headstrong, disobedient, and often painfully wounded a mother's heart." The fifth command makes honoring parents the condition of continuing long in the land, or long a prosperous nation. To save the Jewish commonwealth, the disobedient were to be killed off by this law. If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, nor the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastised him will not hearken unto them. Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him and bring him out unto the elders of the city. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die; so shalt thou put evil away from among you. The greatest advantage of obedience to parents is its power to produce obedience to God. He, who, from the settled habits of childhood, obeys his parents, feels very guilty and greatly distressed if he once disobeys. This well established habit imperceptibly passes to his teacher and all lawful authority, and he feels equally pained when he disobeys. At length, he finds that he has been all his life disobeying his heavenly Parent.

The inquiry meeting is the place to see the unspeakable advantages of obedience. Two are sitting in tears—one having always obeyed his parents, has a deep sense of sin, wonders that such a rebel is out of hell, and begins to feel that there can be no mercy for one who has so wickedly disobeyed God. He soon finds mercy, and is a substantial, devoted Christian. The tears of the other are flowing, because he does not wish to be lost, and he wants the blessings of religion. He confesses himself a sinner in generul terms, but cannot realize that he is very wicked. He always disobeyed his parents, and cannot understand how there can be so much harm in disobeying God. There is no fulcrum in his heart on which to fix a sense of sin, and his seriousness disappears like the morning cloud and early dew.

Were I to promote universalism, I would labor first for the annihilation of family government. This would take away all just apprehensions of the sin of disobedience to God. No man would feel that he deserved hell, and then it would be easy to prove that there will be no such punishment. Genuine conversion follows conviction of sin, and the first right

affection is an act of obedience. Growing in grace is rendering more ready obedience. In Heaven there is perfect obedience, and the final result of obedience paid to earthly parents. Few have rendered ready obedience under the parental roof, who have not sooner or later become Christians. On the other hand, few who do not obey earthly parents, will ever obey the great Parent above. Parents! Your children will obey God much as they do you. If you suffer them to slight your commands, you may look in vain for their conversion. If you would have them ever to obey God, make it forthwith a matter of prime importance to secure their perfect obedience to yourselves.

4. Favoring providences await the obedient.

By habituating themselves to obey lawful authority, children not only obey conscience, reason and interest, instead of passion and sin; but God watches over them for good. Rich blessings followed the children of Abraham, Jonadab, and the Pilgrims. But another doom awaited Spencer, Crowningshield, Arnold, and the sons of Eli. While disobedient children throw themselves without the promise of divine protection, and are exposed to all sorts of evil; God will never forget the child who denies his own inclinations to obey his parents.

Thirty years ago, I knew a lad whose passion was strong for the sea, but he gave it up at the age of fifteen, to obey his widowed mother. A favoring providence never lost sight of that lad till his eloquence filled the galleries of the Senate chamber at Washington. "Columbus was willing to leave the University and work at wool-carding, because his father required it." God guided the steps of that youth till he conducted him to the new world. "When Washington was fourteen years of age, he applied for, and received the appointment of midshipman in the British navy. His baggage was all on board a man-of-war, riding in the Potomac, just below Mount Vernon, when the entreaties of his mother induced him to sacrifice his long cherished desire to the duties of a son." Had he gone to sea, he might have become commander of a vessel, but it is not likely that we should ever have heard of him. God watched over that young man for good, till he stood at the head of our army and our country. The honors bestowed on these men are only straws in comparison with the boon awaiting the poorest children who obey their parents in the Lord.

I will conclude with some directions which should be seasonably, vigilantly, and uniformly carried out by those who ought to exact, or render obedience.

1. Guard against the first act of disobedience. 2. Obey from Christian principle. 3. Obey with once speaking. 4. Obey immediately. 5. Obey when out of sight of superiors. 6. Obey in the presence of the disobedient. 7. Obey till *perfect obedience* becomes a settled habit of the heart, and then *will you reap* the eternal rewards of obedience in Heaven.

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TROY, NEW YORK.

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COLLEGIATE AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AT THE WEST.

Am I my brother's keeper?—GEN. IV., 9.

I NEED hardly remind you of the sad story of which these words are a part. Cain and Abel, at this period, were the only sons of the first human pair. They had just now engaged in acts of professed devotion, in the use of external rites. The younger born came to the altar,—perhaps the first one ever erected in our world,—and, in faith, offered up his bleeding sacrifice. This offering was accepted, probably both on account of its *nature*, as appointed of Heaven, and as shadowing forth, in type or symbol, "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and because this act of obedience was performed in faith. But "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord." This oblation was not accepted, perhaps for the double reason, that it had not been prescribed by divine authority, and there was no faith in the worshipper. "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." This excitement of unholy feeling towards God, was soon followed by an act of fratricide. "And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

In due time God made inquisition for blood, as He will, in all cases, sooner or later do. "And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not. Am I my brother's keeper? And He said, what hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." In the reply of Cain,—"Am I my brother's keeper?"—there is a revelation of heart, which is by no means uncommon in our world, and which is as instructive as it is common. It is an attempt to cover up

sin, by throwing off or denying responsibility. The answer of Cain to his Maker is,—when divested of its rhetorical form,—"I am not my brother's keeper." There is here a denial of a great principle of the divine government, as administered in the social universe, and a regard for which ought to live and act in every human heart. God has made us capable of feeling the power of this principle, and of carrying it out in our intercourse with others. It is embodied in the precept,—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Had Cain been governed by this principle or affection, his arm, instead of dealing the death-blow, would have been his brother's shield in the moment of peril! Let this fraternal love reign triumphant, and personal injuries will cease, and the governing purpose of men will be to do all the good they can to their fellow men. The law of love makes us our brother's keeper. It is a part of our social existence. He has a right to claim this supervision at our hands. So far as we are capable of securing to him those blessings which he may need,—protection when assailed, succor in distress, support in weakness, instruction when ignorant, and, in one word, the means of happiness for this world and the next, the constitution of God and the law of the Bible have placed him under our social and moral keeping. Our ability to do him good, is the rule and limit of our duty.

This social law of love I shall apply to the enterprise which we have now met to contemplate and advance,—"*The Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education in the West.*"

I. The work we have undertaken has *its special difficulties.* This is a preliminary thought.

Some of these difficulties are intrinsic and cannot be removed, nor easily overcome. It is no small matter to excite among the people of the East a proper pulse of benevolence, unless they see things as they are beyond the mountains. The eye must affect the heart. Few, comparatively, can visit and traverse that broad land, and take the time necessary to study and understand its intellectual, social, moral and religious peculiarities. Nor can we speak freely of everything that ought to be known, and of everything that ought to be done.

A picture of Western society drawn to the life,—embracing everything that belongs to a fair and honest delineation of this kind,—the state of schools, academies and colleges—the condition of the ministry and the churches—the estimation in which the Sabbath and sanctuaries are, in too many places, held—family training and the social habits of the people,—would excite prejudice, and perhaps retard the cause which it is intended to accelerate. New countries are always jealous. They never fail to think themselves wiser than they are,—more advanced in learning and the arts of civilized life, than an impartial judge would accord to them; and even when conscious of their own deficiencies, in many things and

to a certain extent, as they often are, they do not like to be told of it, and much less to have it published to the world. We have all seen this exemplified in the history of our own country, in comparison with the older nations. There has been a tendency in the American mind ever since the Declaration of Independence, perhaps we should date its birth at an earlier period,—to consider ourselves "THE *people*," and to believe, not perhaps that "wisdom will *die* with us," but that it must necessarily *live* with us for ever! I need not say, that this feeling is strong in the West. The people would hardly be Anglo-Saxons, if they did not possess it at all. There is something in the very nature of the country, too, as well as in the structure of society, adapted to inspire it, and keep it alive.

Let a man who has his home, either by birth or emigration, in this great valley, stand upon some high bluff which overhangs the mighty "father of waters," and survey the extended, wide-spread and magnificent scene which surrounds him, and other parts of the globe will seem to lessen in his view. New England lies ensconced in a nut-shell. The Atlantic slope is but the fringe upon the mantle of beauty which covers this fertile land. Let him send his thoughts up this picturesque stream, dotted with its thousand green islands, till it reaches, in the distant North, the gushing springs from which it issues,—or let him trace the same stream as it becomes deeper and broader, and more majestic, on its way to the ocean; and you have a single water-course, in its meanderings, of more than two thousand miles in length! On the West, his country, as defined by nature, extends to the Rocky Mountains, and on the East to the summit of the Alleganies,—and these everlasting chains which bind a continent together are thousands of miles apart. Here is room for another Assyrian empire, or for a second Roman. And if we look forward to the full development of the resources of the country, in efficient hands, it may in time unite the golden splendors of the former with the iron hardiness of the latter. The same feelings of independence and self-gratulation are likely to arise in the mind of the owner of the soil, as he stands in the midst of a vast prairie, more luxuriant than a cultivated meadow, and more beauteous than an artificial flower-garden, and seems to be bounded only by that distant glimmering which tells us of the union of earth and sky. There is an inspiration in such scenes. The people of such a country naturally feel that they are a great people. They are not to receive lessons by dictation! Western mind, like the country itself, has the elements of greatness, but like that same country, it needs much cultivation in order to mature and refine its capabilities, and to bring them to bear upon the interests of human happiness and the sublime destinies of the world. Everything is yet in a wild and unsettled state. The forming process, for a permanent and healthful tone of intellect

and moral feeling, has hardly yet commenced. Here is spread out before us an embryo world, and that world is to be peopled by a race of giants; but whether they will be giant-angels or giant-demons, must depend on the beneficence of the Eastern Churches and the grace of God. If left to themselves, the country is ruined. They have not, within themselves, the available resources of intellectual and moral self-preservation. Their means, even if they were disposed to apply them, are not adequate; and the will is often wanting where the ability is not. Without foreign aid, their population, in its rapid increase, must soon fall under the influence of incurable ignorance, or receive its training from those whose principles and policy are adverse to our religious and political institutions. If Christians sleep on, as they have been sleeping, Roman barbarism will have that valley. *There* IS *danger*, and the sooner the note of alarm is sounded, the better. If this note receives a proper response, the work, though difficult, can be done, and the destinies of this immense valley, for ages, perhaps till the millennium and the end of the world, will be settled, as upon a solid and eternal rock.

The Romanists, in their operations in the West, have the advantage of Protestants, in the particular to which I have here alluded. They make no appeals to the public, by presenting pictures of ignorance and vice to be overcome and exterminated, in order to procure funds for their enterprise. There is no need of this. These are already concentrated in a single strong-box, and they are summarily appropriated by an act of the will. All is silent and secret. Neither the plan nor its execution attracts much notice. Little is seen of either, and of that which comes under public inspection, the fair side of the picture is always exhibited. But the ostensible and the real are the antipodes of each other. The Jesuits work in the dark; and a people are often in their chains, before an honest mind, unaccustomed to their subtilties, has a single suspicion awakened. They are in a position in which they can hold their peace and work on. The crowned and mitred heads of Europe are now sending money, extorted from the starving population of Catholic countries, to erect colleges and establish convent-boarding schools,—and all in kindness to the sons and daughters of Protestants. Jesuits and Sisters of Charity are landed in hardly less than ship-loads on our shores, and the greater part of them find their way to the West, and settle in this fertile valley. It is the very spot for their operations. The community is in just the state they would desire in order to insure success. They disturb no popular prejudice, they interfere with no existing forms of society, they denounce no public vice; but they are "all things to all men," till their plans are matured, and their purposes accomplished. This is the true character of the Jesuit, everywhere and in all ages. If history is not a fable, and human experience is not the

figment of a moon-stricken fancy, then there can be no denial of this fact.

II. That we may prosecute this work with becoming vigor, we should recollect, that we are laboring for *a part of our own country.*

The West is our brother-land. Our position, geographical and political, and our relationship, by blood and religious ties, clearly indicate our duty, and urge us forward to its performance. And we must not be "disobedient" to this hardly less than "heavenly vision." The hand of God is in these arrangements. He has placed us where we stand, surrounded with our capabilities, and our kindred where they are, borne down with their necessities, and he has bound us together by the cords of country and consanguinity, that we may bless and be blessed. I can almost hear his voice, in providence, saying, "Where is thy brother?" Thy *Western* brother? And if any one, in the spirit of Cain, should answer, or even the beatings of his selfish heart should seem to indicate the response, "Am I my brother's keeper?" I am constrained to reply, yes, you are your "brother's keeper." God has invested you with this oversight, and there is no escape from it. Nor should a man wish any. In taking care of the West, whatever of anxiety, time or money it may cost us, we are only carrying out the dictates of nature, and giving freedom to the spontaneous actings of a living Christianity. It is all home-work that we are called to do. And in the whole range of benevolence, I am frank in saying, there is no work like this. No public enterprise, so far as we are concerned, whether we consult duty or interest—whether we listen to the voice of piety or sympathy—whether we lift the eye to Heaven in hope, or cast its gaze abroad over the earth's surface, in the joyous anticipation of the bright and triumphant scenes yet to be made real, can stand by its side. None can impose equal claims on us, nor enforce those claims with equal power and pathos. That benevolence which goes abroad to do good,—that would expend its means across the seas and on unfrequented shores, *while the home-field is left uncultivated and waste,*—mark the qualification—"WHILE THE HOME-FIELD IS LEFT UNCULTIVATED AND WASTE,"—is romantic and impracticable; and its efforts will be ultimately inefficient and fruitless. Foreign missions, sublime and Christ-like as are their objects, must fail, so far as we are concerned; for our energies and co-operations will be powerless, if we let our own country become a bleak moral desert. We should soon have nothing at home to expend abroad; or, what is still worse, no heart to appropriate it, and give it a sanctified direction. It would be leading an army abroad for conquest, while the enemy is entering our own camp, or burning and destroying all before him within our own national borders. It is cutting away or annihilat-

ing the very foundation on which we stand, where we are preparing to exert our last energy in attempting to move the world, and lift it up from its moral degradations.

I would not wish to set up the claims of the West against that of any other field, nor our enterprise for giving thorough and adequate instruction to its growing population, against any other great enterprise; but I may say, if the alternative were forced upon us, whatever else is left undone, this work must not be. If every dollar we are now expending on the millions of the dark East, and upon the population of the scattered islands of the sea, and upon the wild tenants of our own deep and unbroken wilderness, must be withheld for ten years, sad as the catastrophe which must follow would be,—or the West be left to grow up without intellectual or moral culture,—I still say, stand by the West! Self-preservation is in this act. The conservation of the world is in it. We lose all, if we lose the West. But I shall have occasion to advert to this point again before I close. I am beginning to anticipate what I can say more appropriately and to better effect in another place.

At this time, and in this stage of my discussion, I wish rather to spread the want before you, as *your own*. *There* is already the home, and *there* will be the sepulchres of many of your brethren and sisters and children. They have gone out from our Eastern fire-sides and schools—colleges and Churches; and there they are to live, and leave their intellectual and moral impress upon the world, and die. And from that land, after having fulfilled an honorable earthly destiny, we would wish to see them take their gladsome flight to heaven. They will there leave their children, and their children's chlldren, to stand up and bless or scourge that land, long after they and we are dead. To take care of them, is only to take care of a branch of our own family. To stand by their interests, social, intellectual, and religious, is to protect the national brotherhood. The principle stated by Paul in his epistle to Timothy, is fairly applicable in this case. "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

I have been in what we call the Great West. I have seen our fathers' children there; and I have charged my soul, before God, never to forget them. Better that "this right hand forget her cunning, or this tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." It is another picture that meets the eye there,—and in many of its lineaments and shades a sad picture, too,—and not the charming one we have been accustomed to gaze upon among ourselves. The friends of God and of a thorough Christian education are comparatively few, and scattered, and feeble. The population is outgrowing their means, and they look to us for help. And as "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh," they should not look in vain. If the West

is "destroyed for lack of knowledge," while we have in our hands the power of averting that doom, God will by and by say to us, —"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." And it will be a fearful cry, if it shall go up to Heaven amidst the convulsions of this Republic, the sacrifice of our liberties and the wreck of our homes!

III. *I advert to the future resources and power of the West*, as making a strong appeal in favor of our movement.

There is nothing new in this topic; but though often discussed, its importance is not at all diminished, nor do I believe that it is well understood and fully appreciated. It is to be regretted that, in our political affairs, we hear so much of Northern, and Southern, and Western interests, as clashing with each other, and striving for mastery in our national councils. But such interests do exist, and the fact cannot be disguised; and some men seem determined to stand by these respective interests, let the nation fare as it may. For one, I should be glad to see all these distinctions blotted out, and an American interest stand up, in fraternal and manly perpetuity, in their place. But we can hardly expect this result till men are more generous and Christ-like. The great remedy now —if the evil admits of any remedy—is to create, as far as may be, in this whole country, a homogeneous people. And while it is readily admitted that this cannot be fully attained, the nearest approximation which can be made to it, must be secured by the Gospel, fresh from the pure source of truth, and a thorough and universal Protestant education. Let these exist and triumph, and Eastern as I am in my position and interests, and my most cherished associations, I have no fear of any man's latitude or longitude. I repeat the sentiment,—and I wish it could be engraved on pillars of brass before every man's eye, or imprinted, if it might be, upon the face of Heaven, in bright stars, over every man's head, so that he could not look up without reading it,—THAT A PURE GOSPEL AND A PROTESTANT EDUCATION ARE THE ONLY SAFEGUARDS OF THIS REPUBLIC. These wanting, our sheet anchor is gone. We are upon a stormy sea, without chart or compass or rudder! Without these, a free government may exist in name, but not in spirit. The soul is gone, and the body that remains is a carcass, and not an animated existence.

But let us glance a thought at the capabilities of that country. We have all heard, again and again, of its vast extent. After crossing the great river which divides it into eastern and western sections, you may trace one stream—the Missouri, from its source along a most beautiful and fertile valley for three thousand miles, and when it mingles its turbid waters with the clear, crystal wave of the Mississippi, it is more than twelve hundred miles, by the channel it travels, from the ocean. Take the States and Territo-

ries this side of the Mississippi river, and north of the Ohio, and they may hereafter sustain, if as populous as Europe, nearly thirty millions of people; and if as populous as China,—and there is no reason why they may not be—forty millions. And this is less than one quarter of the valley. The whole area of it may be set down at one million one hundred thousand square miles; and with the population of China upon each square mile, we shall have one hundred and sixty-five millions of immortal beings growing up for eternity.* Nor are we to forget, that the country is as rich in resources, as it is broad and boundless. Never did mortal eye rest in silent rapture upon a finer soil, or upon more luxuriant productions. And the treasures that lie buried beneath the surface, are as productive and valuable as those which are above it. The lead and copper mines are among the best in the world. Iron and other useful metals abound. Building materials for cottages or palaces, possessing the properties both of beauty and durability, are not wanting. In one word, everything necessary for converting the wilderness into smiling harvest-fields, and joyous and exulting cities, nature has furnished in abundance. God, too, who made this land of wealth and beauty, has opened the best channels of commerce, by their own waters among themselves, and, by their easy access to the ocean, unto the ends of the world. Their products may reach every clime.

But we need not look forward so far as I have contemplated in these remarks, for the illustration of the thought I wish to present. We need no theory in the case. I cite your attention to a few facts which can be well authenticated, and which any one can easily comprehend. And as they are facts, neither faith nor imagination need have anything to do with them. They are gathered from the last number of "The Home Missionary," though here arranged for my present purpose. Fifty-eight years ago, the first settlements were made in Ohio, and now the State contains one million seven hundred and thirty-two thousand inhabitants. Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Missouri and Iowa, contain, at this time, 2,850,000 souls, and yet the oldest of these States began to be settled about thirty years ago, and the youngest territory about ten. Iowa has received sixty thousand inhabitants during the last four years. These facts should be pondered on by the philanthropist, whether Christian or statesman, for they have important relations. The salvation of the country may depend on a course of action which shall be wisely adapted to their existence and bearings.

In a few years the rod of empire will be held and swayed in that valley. The people who shall be spread over those broad prairies and settled along those large rivers, and cover the shores, and do

* This includes the whole area drained by the Mississippi and all its tributaries.

business on the bosoms of those inland seas, will govern this country. Their numerical power, though but of yesterday, is already immense. The document I have just quoted from "The Home Missionary" has this important summing up. "As a consequence of this transfer of population, there is a steady but rapid transfer of POLITICAL INFLUENCE. In ten years, from 1830 to 1840, the EAST *lost*, by the change of the ratio of representation, 31 members in Congress more than it gained by the increase of population; while, in the same period, the WEST *gained*, by increase of population, 11 members more than it lost by the change of ratio—making a difference of FORTY-TWO votes. The seven new States and Territories above enumerated—to say nothing of the other western and south-western States and Texas—have increased, since the last adjustment of the ratio, *more than a million and a half* —enough to entitle them to 16 more members in our national legislature." On many questions of deep political interest, the West, at this day, holds the balance of power. It has already given us Texas and the Mexican war, whatever of good or evil there may be in them, and it had well nigh, at one time, opened the sluices of death upon us from another quarter.

Let me here say, that these facts are not stated for the purpose of exciting prejudice against the West. Far from it. The East cherishes no spirit of jealousy. We fix our eye on a higher and a holier aim. If the people of that valley are to govern this whole land, with all its growing and almost boundless resources, then they should be educated for their post of honor and trust. And they cannot do this needful work for themselves. Everything is too new for it. The wealth of the country is prospective, and not yet available. Everything is unripe and immature; and such an enterprise as I have contemplated, cannot be entered upon, with the hope of success, in their present circumstances. They have not the men nor means for it. But give the people time to build their own houses, to turn over the soil of their prairies, which has been aggregating vegetable mould for ages; and to let into the dark forest, by the hard blows of the axeman, the sunlight of heaven upon their harvest-fields,—and then they will be able to found and sustain their own institutions, and leave us to do the same work, in its incipient stages, for a further and a still further West. And they too will join in this onward triumph of Christianity and letters.

IV. Let us examine more particularly *the specific influence of our own labors.*

Many blessed agencies are needed in the West; and while we are associated to give life and activity to a single one, I must not pass in silence some others, lest I might seem to undervalue them.

The West cannot be enlightened and saved without Home Missions, Bibles, Tracts, Sunday Schools, and an efficient scheme of popular education. All these are the sources of light and love —of intelligence and piety. Those societies which have planted ministers amidst a growing people, placed the Word of God in destitute families, furnished sound religious books for general reading, founded libraries for the young, or raised up teachers for primary schools, have done a good work, which the records of future time and the disclosures of another world, alone can fully publish. I love all these associations. In the name of the Lord, I welcome them to this promising field. There is room enough and to spare, for there is much waste land yet unoccupied. The only rivalship which should exist between any or all of these, should be that of love and self-denial. I say to them all, increase your means, add celerity to your movements, multiply your momentum, enlarge the circumference of your moral power. Glory and happiness wait upon your footsteps. The more these agencies prosper, the brighter are the prospects of our own success. Had it not been for these, and especially for Home Missions, our Board would never have existed. These are all stars of varied brightness, forming one glowing constellation, and looking down benignly, from the moral heavens, upon this land of beauty and promise. We would not pluck one of them from its high sphere, nor extinguish its bright beams. Let them roll forward and shine on, till the immortal sun, in full-orbed glory—without a cloud and without an eclipse, shall cover that valley with a purer and a richer light.

But after all these admissions, which are intended to do ample justice to every other agency in operation for the good of the West, the intellectual and moral machinery is imperfect, without our organization, or some kindred plan, to secure the means of a thorough classical education. What we call the COLLEGE, occupies a niche which cannot be left vacant among us, without marring the whole system of American training. While it forms the controlling minds of this country, it keeps academies and common schools from utter extinction. Strike out this link, and the chain is broken, and we should soon find ourselves on the downward way to ignorance and barbarism. The learned professions are supplied from our colleges. Demolish these structures, and scatter their professors and other teachers, and our churches are without pastors and the pagan field without missionaries. In our day, and in the midst of our popular institutions, a portion of the community, and a constantly increasing portion too, will cultivate the higher branches of learning which go to make up a liberal education. And somebody must take the lead in this business, and mould the mind, and set up the framework of character, and give to it the touches of beauty and elegance for coming ages. And the great question to be settled for the West—and to be settled soon, is,

shall this business be done by Romanists or by Protestants? Depend upon it, this *is* the question—and one of graver moment, or of more lasting consequences of weal or woe, was never settled in this land since the first blow of the axe echoed in the forests of New England.

The Jesuits are among the best politicians in the world, and they are the only class, as far as I know, who are willing to postpone their success till they can educate at least one generation for their purpose. They have long had their eye on the country in question. They claim it by the right of discovery and the grant of the Pope. It is now more than a century and a half since French Jesuits, accompanied by French soldiers, traversed the whole extent of this valley from the falls of St. Anthony to the Gulf of Mexico, and took possession of it in the name of their king. Here, too, are the remains of their early settlements, almost coeval with the discovery of the country. And now this subtle and dangerous order are making special efforts to repossess themselves of this territory, and control it under the government of the United States. I have not time to discuss their plans at large. But there is one point where they are concentrating all their skill and power, in which we have a special interest. They intend to educate the West, and to control mind by first shaping it to their wishes. And if we let the Jesuits and their counterparts, the Sisters of Charity, mould one generation, it would require the labor of ages to counteract and obliterate their wrong doings; to eliminate from the spiritual man the subtle moral poison. But these evils may be forestalled and prevented by the timely application of the appropriate means. This work our Board has undertaken, by the aid of the churches, to perform. And our "labor will not be in vain in the Lord."

The Jesuits, of all the men in our world, are the most to be dreaded. Soon after they first arose in Europe in 1540, they did more to check the progress of the reformation, and restore the power of Rome, than all other agencies combined; and no small portion of their power was exerted through educational channels. Since the full restoration of their order by the Pope, in 1814, they are as active as ever, and are endeavoring to re-establish their influence by becoming the educators of the world. Their present general, Rothaan, residing at the very centre of papal dominion, is a fit successor of Loyola; and the Revival of Romanism, all over the world, is to be attributed mainly to the efforts of this secret order. "The society," it has been said, "is a sword, of which the hilt is at Rome! But if the hilt be there, the blade is everywhere, and that with so fine an edge as to make itself felt before it can be seen." It is not necessary to say or believe that they are all dishonest men. Whoever contemplates their system of education with a philosophical eye, their schemes for repressing thought and

crushing mind, and inducing implicit and slavish submission—will be disposed to put them into two classes, the deceivers and the deceived. But I would say with Miss Beecher, that "none but the omniscient eye can point out, in this powerful and extending fraternity, which are the crushed and helpless victims, and which the infidel and artful knaves."

It is a well known fact, that these men are establishing their institutions of learning all over the West, and they expect to gain their object by educating the sons and daughters of Protestants. Of their money there seems to be no end. In some parts of Europe, where they have oppressed and robbed the people for ages, and where their system is nearly worn out, they have more money than they can use, and it is sent to our country in large sums to make experiments upon a new field. During the last few years, they have established the following institutions in Cincinnati. The female institution, the property of which is valued at $30,000, the Nunnery and female school, for which were paid $32,000—an establishment under the care of the Sisters of Charity, which may be estimated at $12,000, and the school for boys, under the care of the Jesuits, the property of which must be worth $10,000. Here we have the sum of $84,000 in one city, while the endowment of St. Xavier College, in the same place, probably has more funds than all these institutions put together.

From the Metropolitan Catholic Almanac for 1847, we learn that they have in the United States 21 Ecclesiastical Institutions, 24 Literary Institutions for young men, and 66 Female Academies. The term "Ecclesiastical Institutions," includes Theological Seminaries, Novitiates of the Society of Jesus, and Colleges for the exclusive education of young men destined for the priesthood. They also say—"Of the *Literary* Institutions for young men mentioned in the above table, only *thirteen* are COLLEGES properly organized; the rest are establishments of a minor order." These statements show that the Romanists are placing their main dependence on seminaries of the highest order. The whole number of institutions named above is 111. Among the "literary institutions for young men," they tell us that there are "13 colleges properly organized." Add these to the 21 Ecclesiastical Seminaries, and we have 34 institutions of the highest order, and only 77 Academies, male and female. Here we have a college or an ecclesiastical institution to a little more than two academies—nearly one third of all their seminaries is of the superior order. Among Protestants, we have not more than one college or theological school to 12 or 15 academies. These facts, I think, will justify the Board in the position they have taken to confine their aid to Institutions of the first rank—thus adapting their beneficence to the peculiar wants of the West.

But in almost everything, except funds, the Jesuits labor under

great disadvantages by the side of Protestant teachers, and especially in a country of free thought and popular investigation, like ours. With all their learning, and tact, and drilling, it would be a profanation of the term to say, that the Jesuits are *educated* men. They are *trained, moulded, shaped, disciplined, pruned, bent, braced, pinioned, stereotyped*, and, if you please, *learned* in their way, but they are not EDUCATED—because they have never been taught to *think*. The hidden man has never been explored, and its powers awakened and drawn out, and made to act. Ten pages of Lord Bacon on induction would overset their whole scheme. A blind faith, and not investigation, pervades everything. It intermeddles with matters of pure science, and has just as much to do with the exegesis of the Bible, as with the admission of its doctrines. No man should place his son under such teachers, unless he wishes to see a free mind crushed into a mere machine.

With their own religious scheme they are well acquainted, and their tactics are systematic and perfect. They can, on all occasions, accommodate themselves to all circumstances and to all creeds. The Abbè Boileau, himself a Catholic, says, "they are a sort of people who lengthen the creed, and shorten the decalogue." Proteus is no longer a fabulous character; and if ancient mythology had been inspired, it would have fixed upon him as the prophetic type of a Jesuit; and all modern expounders would have concurred in the application. "One of them in India produced a pedigree to prove his own descent from Brahma; and another in this country assured a native chief that Christ had been a valiant and victorious warrior, who, in the space of three years, had scalped an incredible number of men, women and children."

In the West they are carrying out, with all their subtilty and all their soft and bland accommodation to the social state of the people, their old and familiar schemes. I have lately glanced my eye over an account, published by the Catholics, of laying the corner-stone of Sinsinawa Mound College, in Wisconsin, from which I wish to present a few particulars. The ceremonies took place on the 24th of May, 1846. It was on Sabbath. This should not be forgotten. "The sun of the 24th," says their own account of this pageant, "had scarcely risen when the bold bluffs of the Mississippi reverberated the roar of a cannon, fired from the Mound." The "little city of Dubuque" was in "a bustle." "Horses and vehicles of all sorts and sizes were put in requisition," and "the two ferry boats were plied, without intermission, from day-light till dark." While "high mass was sung" in the church, "by far the greater portion of both sexes promenaded the lawn, or kept up a chit-chat in the hall or porch. After mass, all partook of a repast prepared for the occasion." At the close of a speech made by a gentleman who has been somewhat prominent in political and military life, "the audience rent the air with shouts." "The

corner-stone was then fitted to its future abode amid strains of music and the roar of cannon." These things would never be enacted by the Jesuits, on the Sabbath, in the State of New York, or in New England. They understand time and place too well for such a movement.

One of the speakers on this occasion,—an attorney from Dubuque, in Iowa,—has undertaken to show, that the Romish Church has always been the advocate of popular education, and that her system is well adapted to free institutions. To show that their Church is friendly to "the education of the people," he refers us, among other countries, to Canada, Mexico, South America, Spain, Italy, and Ireland! After giving us some statistics relative to Canada East, he arrives at this conclusion,—"So we perceive, that our Catholic neighbor is as well provided, if not a little better than ourselves." But of the 1629 schools, and the sixty-three higher institutions of learning, which he says exist in that country, he is silent as to the proportion which belongs to Protestants. They are all virtually credited to Catholics. It was ascertained, by actual examination made a few years since, that, among the Romanists in a district of country bordering on the State of New York, and under the eye and supervision of the priesthood, only *one* in *fifteen* could read. This is popular education, as they would have it! We are to believe, that the Mexicans are an enlightened people, because the American Minister to that country, or some other visitant, found, at the city of Puebla, a free school in which six hundred boys are educated, and this school is liberally patronized by two Catholic bishops. Why did he not tell us other facts? Here a fair experiment has been made,—the Catholic Church is in full power,—the priesthood exercise a spiritual dictatorship not less absolute than a military despotism; and yet a reputable writer has told us that, in the city of Mexico, not more than one in twenty can read and write; and this is probably a fair specimen of the country at large. The provinces of Paraguay and Uraguay, in South America, must be, according to this speaker, better educated than any other portion of our globe,—and for all this they are indebted, he says, to "those pious missionaries," THE JESUITS. He affirms, that "every individual in the community is taught reading, writing, and arithmetic." If he believed all this, we do not wonder he exclaimed, as he finished the beautiful and glowing picture of this enlightened country,—"Would to God, we could say as much of our own happy Republic!" The only evidence that Spain furnishes a thoroughly educated people, is the statement of the fact, that the kingdom contains twenty-seven Universities,—which a mere child can see is not at all in point. The education of the *people* is the subject of inquiry. He would have us believe, that Italy is better furnished with "schools for the education of the children of the middle and

lower classes" than Scotland, or any other Protestant country in Europe;—and Ireland stood at the head of nations, till men of other views and from another land, "made it a felony to be educated."

I have not time to dissect these assertions and expose their fallacies, but have merely recorded them, in this connexion, as entitled to a place among the strange things that men will do, in the very face of fact and history, in order to serve a purpose. In an intelligent community they may be safely left to answer themselves.

As to the tried and uniform attachment of the Romish Church to the rights of man,—to popular freedom,—to the universal and unqualified enfranchisement of the human mind,—he says, "Be good Catholics, and you will be *the better democrats*. Volumes, my friends," he adds, "could be filled with facts and authorities, all proving conclusively, that the Catholic Church is not now, and never was, opposed to civil liberty or democratic institutions; but on the contrary, is, and ever has been, the advocate of the largest liberty to the greatest number. She has always been, where she always will be found, on the side of the oppressed of every nation, battling against the oppressor in every shape."

This is papacy on the banks of the Mississippi. But what is this system, that claims to be infallible, and of course is always the same, and never changes, on the banks of the Tiber? The Encyclical Letter of the late Pope shall answer this question. "From that polluted fountain of indifference," says his Holiness, "flows that absurd and erroneous doctrine, or rather raving, in favor of defence of *liberty of conscience*, for which most pestilential error the course is open by that entire and wild liberty of opinion which is everywhere attempting the overthrow of civil and religious institutions; and which the unblushing impudence of some has held forth as an advantage of religion." "Hence, in one word, that part of all others most to be dreaded in a State, unbridled liberty of opinion." And again, "Hither tends that worst, and never sufficiently to be execrated and detested liberty of the press, for the diffusion of all manner of writings, and which some so largely contend for, and so actively promote."

These are THE DICTA of the infallible head of the Church, or, as some would have it, the head of the infallible Church. And I would ask, what kind of democracy is this; in accordance with which "LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE" is denounced as an "absurd and erroneous doctrine, or rather *raving*,"—and "LIBERTY OF OPINION" branded as the pioneer of the same "*most pestilential error*," and as "*primâ facie*" evidence of "*unblushing impudence*" in those who maintain it, and "*a pest of all others most to be dreaded in a State*," and "THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS" pointed at, with *indignant* scorn, *as an evil* of the "worst" stamp, and "never sufficiently to be execrated or detested?"

It is in the very teeth of his spiritual master, Gregory Sixteenth, that the Western orator has asserted, "that the Catholic Church," —"is, and ever has been, the advocate of the largest liberty to the greatest number;" and that those who are "good Catholics," "will be the *better democrats*,"—unless he maintains, on the one hand, that the late Pope was not a good Catholic, or, on the other, that "liberty of conscience," "liberty of opinion," and "liberty of the press," have no necessary connexion with popular institutions!

By the side of the declaration, "that the Roman Catholic Church is not now, and never was, opposed to civil liberty, or democratic institutions;" but, on the contrary, "is, and ever has been, the advocate of the largest liberty to the greatest number," read a few passages from the Rheimish Testament. The note on Luke 9: 55 is in point. James and John wished to call down fire from Heaven, and consume certain persons who had put a slight upon their Master. "But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." The comment says, "the Church or Christian princes" are not here "blamed for putting heretics to death." The Annotation on Matt. 31 : 29— "But he said, nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them,"—teaches us, that "where ill men, be they *heretics* or *other malefactors*, may be punished or suppressed without disturbance or hazard of the good, they may and ought, by public authority, either spiritual or temporal, to be chastised or executed." On Hebrews 10 : 29,—"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy,"&c.—we have this very summary declaration, "*How much more.* Heresy and apostasy from the Catholic faith punishable by death." But I need not enlarge. Surely these specimens are enough from this anti-republican and bloody code. When these sentiments, or those from the pen of the late Pope, can be reconciled with the declarations made upon Sinsinawa Mound, then may light and darkness commingle their natures, Christ and Belial walk through the world hand in hand, and a popular government, securing to every man, by a written constitution, freedom of opinion, the rights of conscience, and the liberty of speech and the press, and an unchecked and iron-hearted despotism, be pronounced identical and the same.

These impositions must be exposed and rebuked, and the unwary bird must be liberated from the snare of the fowler, or this country is ruined. And this thing must be done on the spot. We of the East can act only remotely in this matter. The people of the West must have their own institutions and their own men. The battle of liberty and of mind is to be fought in that valley. The enemy is marshalling his forces, and the friends of a spiritual Christianity and of free thought must stand at their post, and there is no fear of the result. Thinking is not yet a heresy in this land, and if it should be so deemed by any, there is no physical

power to inflict a penalty! This is our time to work. Another generation may be too late.

No labored argument is needed to prove that Colleges and Theological Schools are demanded in order to meet this state of things, and repel this invasion upon truth and liberty in the West. These institutions should be of a high character,—equal to any in our land. A few sickly establishments bearing the name will not answer the purpose. They should be officered by some of the first men of our country, and they should possess large and well selected libraries and all other aids to a liberal and finished education. And this must be done, or the West cannot be saved, and the East may eventually go down into ruin with her! But let that country be provided for, liberally, nobly and above-board, and we fear not the influence of these foreign adventurers. What can the drilled and laced Jesuit, with his old text-books, and his obsolete methods of giving instruction, and his false and garbled histories, his proscribed and half-suppressed sciences, do, in this age and in this country, by the side of teachers who have been educated in our Eastern Colleges,—who were first taught to think in their mother's arms, and who have made *thinking* the element of their being and the business of their lives, ever since? Why, he will shrink into the shade, where some men flourish the best, before the blaze of such a light. Those trammels upon free thought and full investigation, will be as ineffectual among us, as the decree of the Vatican which declared the earth to be as flat as a trencher! That same earth has ever since, in its globular form, continued to move on, in its orbit, and turn on its axis, as independent and uncompromising as any other Protestant. And so it will be with the people of this land. To transform the United States into an Italy, or a Spain, or a Mexico, where the woman, gorgeously arrayed, and decked with gold and precious stones, and holding the "cup in her hand full of abominations," rides upon the "scarlet-colored beast," is not among the possibilities of the future! God reigns, and the Bible and its institutions will prevail and fill the world with light and happiness, and pæans of glory! This is Heaven's high purpose, and it must and will stand.

V. I close by adverting briefly to the *probable effects of our labors in the cause of Western education.*

Had I time, and were it necessary, I should love to dwell on the almost morally certain results,—should it be fully and faithfully executed,—of our scheme to furnish the means of a finished education in the States and Territories embraced in the operations of our Board. The enterprise is loudly called for, and, by those who have studied it most, fully approved; and Eastern philanthropists who have money to spare for any field, I believe will carry on this enterprise, and God will bless it. But what mind short of

the *Infinite* can estimate the fruits of these doings, as they shall hereafter cover the soil where the seed is first deposited,—as a return of blessings, not less rich and abundant, shall make glad the older portions of our country,—and the joyous harvest-home be shouted across every continent, and reach the remotest islands in the bosom of the sea!

Look then, for one moment, at these results, in this three-fold relation,—as they will affect the West, our country at large, and the world we inhabit. Had I the talent for such an execution, I would present a picture to the eye of the imagination, or rather to *the eye of faith*, which would elevate our enterprise to a commanding pinnacle where it ought to stand, and bring it out in a radiance of light, till every eye should be attracted by its imposing moral grandeur! We are at work for ages to come, in the present world, and for the ages which are always coming, and never waste away, in another!

Survey this broad and beauteous valley, a half century or a century hence, under the benign influence of the agencies put in motion by this Board, filled with schools of every order, and especially with the higher seminaries for instruction in science, and classical literature, and theological learning. Its population may then be computed by hundreds of millions,—and these vast multitudes enlightened, industrious and happy. The institutions of knowledge and piety we sustain will send out their streams to bless the land, and science and religion will mingle their waters to refresh a grateful people. What more benign or blessed work could we project or accomplish, than to plant another New England, or raise up such a population as New England has furnished in some other portions of our country, beyond the mountains? If we do our duty to the West, that smiling valley, while the world stands, will reap the benefits of our well-timed labors.

Nor will these blessings be confined to that valley. A reflex influence may be looked for. We ourselves, and all the East, and all this American Republic, till the last ages of our confederacy, will share in the consequences of every wisely directed blow in the Western field. I have said, the inhabitants of that portion of our country are to be,—and at no remote period,—the majority, and give us laws, and give us rulers; and, from the very nature of our government, we must feel our full share of the influence of their wisdom or folly. If they are intelligent and pious, and stand in their place, and discharge their social responsibilities, in the great brotherhood of this Republic, we are blessed as well as they. When the anthem of gladness shall be lifted up in that valley, and be shouted from the great Appalachian chain to the rugged cliffs of the Rocky Mountains, and shall roll down the western slope to the shores of the mighty Pacific, we too, on the Atlantic borders, shall be permitted to join in the loud choral hallelujah! The cup of their happiness will also be ours. By their

intelligence and prosperity, our whole nation will be protected and saved.

If any would estimate correctly the influence of the higher institutions of learning upon the future destinies of the West, he must examine and see what they have done for the East. They have made New England and the other northern Atlantic States what they are. Their agency in civilization and the progress of society can hardly be overrated. Take a few facts. "More than half of the graduates of Harvard University, for the first sixty years of its existence, became ministers of the gospel. Nearly three-fourths of the graduates of Yale, for the first twelve years, entered the ministry, and a little less than one-half during the first thirty years." Of the eight hundred graduates of Middlebury College, nearly one-half have devoted themselves to the same office, and twenty-three have entered the foreign missionary field. In civil life the long list of governors, senators, justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, and judges of the highest State courts, distinguished members of Congress, and the lights of medical and legal science, can bear testimony to the pre-eminent importance of these and other similar institutions.

Nor is the world to be excluded from those blessings which we are endeavoring to secure, under God, for our Western brethren. Remote nations, and unborn and distant ages, may be sharers in our success or defeat. The poet hath said of "mercy"—

> "It is twice bless'd,—
> It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

But the truth would not be marred, if the poetry should be, if we were to affirm, that it is indeed *thrice* blessed,—it not only blesses him that gives and him that takes, but it blesses those who witness the noble deed, and come within the sphere of its influence. The world becomes the ultimate gainer. The reflex action rests not alone upon the benefactor. Every generous, Christian enterprise becomes a glowing, radiant point, from which rays of light and truth are sent out, through the whole circumference of the circle, to cheer and bless the race. I have long believed, that God directed our forefathers to the bleak coast of New England, and planted their feet on the rock of Plymouth, and, after having deeply schooled them in the lessons of adversity, made them a prosperous and happy people, that they may bear a prominent part in the conversion of the world to Christ. And they have been the pioneers from this continent, in this work. Their incipient doings and sacrifices have been blessed. But we need the West with us. We need their talents, and influence, and future resources. We need their future men and means. Indeed, we need the nation with us. And this co-operation can be secured only by the united influence of knowledge and religion. If the experiment of popu-

lar institutions and a free Christianity should fail here, it will fail because the nation, in its far distant and extending borders, is permitted to be overrun by ignorance and impiety. And should this experiment fail, it would be a dark day to the nations. It would be like another earthly apostasy, or the fall of another morning star from Heaven! But let the colleges, and academies, and schools, and Orthodox Churches of the best portions of the East, be spread all over our Western country, and, under the Divine protection, they are safe, and we are safe, and this land will send forth, under the banner of the Son of God, a trained and mighty army to the peaceful and bloodless subjugation of the world.

SERMON CCCCXLIII.

BY THE LATE REV. DANIEL A. CLARKE.

Furnished, from the unpublished manuscripts of the author, by his son, Rev. F. G. Clark.

THE IMPORTUNATE PRAYER.

Oh, Lord! How long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear?—Hab. i., 2.

In the winter of 1829–1830, during one of the first "protracted meetings" that was held in this part of the country, and which preceded a powerful revival of religion, there came in the town of —— a moment of awful suspense. The children had seemed to come to the birth, and there was not strength to bring forth. Meetings of high interest had been held for several days. A powerful sermon upon the parable of the prodigal son had been preached on the Saturday evening previous, when it was supposed that some fifty or more had listened for the first time to the message of eternal mercy. But nearly four days had now elapsed since the commencement of the meeting, and the apprehension began to be felt that the words of the prophet might be descriptive of our state: "Oh, Lord! how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear?" It was the opinion of the brethren that we must unite special prayer with another effort, throwing the whole responsibility upon the Lord, and applying to him to vindicate his own honor, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. There was a silent agreement to do so, and the inquiry was made, "Who shall address us?" We had come together without much concert, to pray and preach the gospel, for several days, as was not unusual at that time; leaving it with God to direct all the movements from day to day.

The preacher being selected, he rose and offered to preach if the brethren would not leave him to stand alone, but would be much in prayer; after which he named the text above mentioned: "*Oh, Lord! how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear?*"

The question to be answered is this: *How long will God suffer his people to pray, and still neglect to hear?*

I answer—

I. *Till they see the plague of their own hearts*—till each one sees his own individual iniquities, and lies in the dust before God. Each must learn what there is that stands between God and his own soul, and shuts out his prayers, and when he thus lies between the porch and the altar, and supplicates "with strong crying and tears," God will lift him up, and speak kindly to him, and allow him to come boldly to his throne, that he "may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

II. God will let his people cry, and will not hear, *till the church feels that she stands in the gap between God and a sin-destroyed world, and that he will be inquired of to do all that he has promised*, to give unto the sons of men "a new heart and a right spirit." Christians must feel that they have special audience at the throne of grace; that to them the sceptre of mercy is ever extended, and that God will put honor upon their prayers.

III. God will let his people cry, and will not hear, *till they are willing to do whatever of duty he requires, in addition to praying.* If God would have them spend much of their time in arousing their brethren to duty, in passing from house to house and pressing home the truth upon the conscience and the heart, "in season and out of season," they must do all this or they cannot hope for a revival, and this may be a field where the Christian must labor as hard as the men of the world.

IV. God will let his people cry and not hear them, *till they move the stumbling-blocks out of the way of a revival of his work.* It may be that some of the professed people of God "drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils;" it may be that they are sleeping in seed-time, and must "beg in harvest and have nothing." They may not hear the sound of their Master's feet at the door, nor heed at all the midnight cry. When the savages of our Western wilds were wont to meet for feasting and carousal, they used to appoint a sentinel, who should watch them when overcome with sleep, and give timely notice of the approach of any foe. If Christians were thus watchful, how often would it save them from being ensnared and taken?

V. Finally, God will let his people cry and not hear, *if he sees in them any disposition to withhold from him the glory of the work he does.* The glory due to himself he will not even *share* with another. If he must "make his people willing in the day of his power," he will have *all* the praise. "His glory he will not

give to another." The work of grace in the human soul must be begun, continued, and ended by Divine power. The sinner lies inactive and inoperative till he is "created in Jesus Christ unto good works," and becomes a new creature in him. It is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

REMARKS.

1. We see from this subject why so many prayers seem to be offered in vain.
2. We see some of the causes of spiritual declension in the Church.
3. This subject shows us how we should set about raising the Church from her low estate.
4. We see the duty of every Christian to search well his own heart. Such hindrances to a revival are the sins of *individuals*. Each Christian, therefore, must search and purify *himself*.
5. Lastly, since the Church is by Divine appointment the medium of communicating spiritual blessings to a perishing world, how fearful is her responsibility; and how great should be her watchfulness, lest by her apathy, her selfishness, or her unbelief, she hinder the work of the Lord.

SERMON CCCCXLIV.

BY THE LATE REV. DANIEL A. CLARK.

FATAL TENDENCIES OF UNBELIEF.

To whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?—HEB. III., 18.

THIS text may be taken as setting forth *the fatal tendencies of unbelief*. The question is asked with regard to ancient Israel, but is equally applicable to sinners of all ages and nations. Mankind are wont to attribute the loss of the soul to other causes than the sin of unbelief.

I. I proceed to mention a few of these alleged causes, with a view to show that the soul's loss is not justly due to them.

1. In the first place, I remark that *sinners do not perish for*

want of fulness in the atonement. This is ample for the salvation of the whole world. The invitation is universal. "Ho *every one* that thirsteth, come up to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, and buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." "*Whosoever will*, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

2. *Neither do they perish for any want of benevolence on the part of God in the application of the atonement.* After God gave his only begotten Son to die for sinners, men never had occasion to doubt his readiness to save them.

3. *Neither do they perish from any inability to accept of the provisions of the atonement.* The terms of salvation are adapted to the very nature of the corrupt and ruined sinner, and are such that if he will, he may look and live. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so has the Son of Man been lifted up.

4. *Neither do they perish for want of sufficient evidence of any truth which God requires them to believe.* God has furnished us a fulness of testimony. Unbelief itself implies a sufficiency of evidence; and the very iniquity of unbelief consists in rejecting that evidence.

5. *Neither do they perish by reason of any old decrees of God.* God could never make any decree clashing with his present purposes of mercy. His purposes are ever fresh and vigorous like himself.

6. *Neither do they perish on account of any necessity in the government of God, except such as is created by the sinner's unbelief.* This pours contempt upon his character and authority. In Jesus Christ his justice, truth, and righteousness can all be honored. In him, "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

II. It must be admitted that none of the above-mentioned things are able to destroy the soul without the intervention of the damning sin of unbelief. *This only removes the soul beyond the possibility of cure.* Faith appropriates the gift of grace through our Lord Jesus Christ. Without it, it is impossible to please God. If he that comes to God *must* believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, how can *he* come acceptably whose heart is full of unbelief? If faith is the only key which opens Heaven, how will *he* gain an entrance who is destitute of this saving principle? The sick man who locks the door of his chamber because he distrusts the physician's skill, may perish in his bed, although the physician, once admitted, might bring remedies that would effect a cure. So the sin-polluted soul may perish within the reach of the Balm of Gilead, through distrust of its saving power.

REMARKS.

1. *We see that sinners may be ruined by unbelief, and yet not be immediately sent to perdition.* Some who perished in the camp of Israel lived nearly forty years after God had sworn that they should not enter into his rest.

2. *Every sinner perishes a suicide.* Nothing bars the gates of Heaven but his own wilful unbelief, the sin for which he has the slightest shadow of apology.

3. *We see why unbelief is placed in the van of those sins which damn the soul.* It is a sin against the remedy. It is an attempt to destroy the very life-boat which is sent out to save the ship-wrecked multitude. It shuts, and holds to, the only door and hope of mercy.

4. *God's glory will be untarnished in the ruin of the lost.* It will appear that he did everything to save sinners that needed to be done; yea, more—he gave them more power than they needed. They had the Spirit's agency to resist, they had evidence to trample upon. They perished because they would not believe. Their verdict will stand throughout eternal ages. *Ye would not come unto me that ye might have life.* And when at last the earth shall have opened and swallowed up the multitudes of the ungodly, it will be seen written in capitals of fire on the clouds that overhang the pit:

"*They could not enter in because of* UNBELIEF."

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THE USES OF AFFLICTION TO THE MINISTER OF CHRIST.*

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.—2 COR. i. 3, 4.

How precious is comfort! It is not joy; it even admits of grief; it may not stay the flood of tears; but it takes away the bitterness of sorrow; it moderates pain and distress; it soothes the aching heart; it makes the soul appear calm and serene in all the weakness and the tribulations of the flesh, even as the sun smiles most sweetly when fringed with clouds, and tinges with his warmest hues the falling drops.

Joy to a wounded spirit is unseemly. Mirth and song grate on the bleeding heart, and break the tender strings that grief has strained; but comfort lays her hand upon the quivering chords and hushes them to peace. Comfort, *sweet comfort!* it almost renders grief a luxury; it takes the sting from death. Blessed be God for comfort! He, "the Father of mercies," is most merciful in this that he is "the God of all comfort," and comforteth his servants in all their tribulation. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though

*This discourse was occasioned by the recent sudden death of a sister of the author, at Philadelphia. As he was summoned to her death-bed on the day of his weekly lecture, and was detained from home over the Sabbath, the peculiar circumstances of his affliction became so generally known among his people, and awakened so much sympathy, as to call for some allusion to the event in public, after his return. He felt bound, moreover, as a preacher of the Gospel, to bear his humble testimony to the value of its consolations in the hour of trial.

the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." *There* is *comfort.* The storms come—we cannot stay them; they rage with violence; they spread desolation around; God does not interpose to prevent it; he who commands the winds and the waves, now leaves them apparently without control; he even suffers us to be scathed and prostrated by the sudden blast; but as we recover from the shock, he offers us a refuge; he leads us to a place of safety; he gives us help; he does not keep trouble from us, but he is present as our help in trouble—and that is *comfort.* "In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. The Lord is my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort; he is my rock and my fortress." The billows may roll over me, the "proud waters" may go over my soul, but I cannot sink, for God shall set me upon a rock. I may wander in a desert, in a dry and thirsty land; my earthly comforts may be gone, and I may seek in vain for any solace; but God will not suffer me to perish thus: he will be "as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." This is comfort. The causes of grief are not removed, but consolation is brought in. Trials are not taken from us, but we are strengthened to bear them. The winds still howl, the billows still roll, the waste and burning sands still lie around; but there is a refuge from the wind; there is a rock above the waves; there are water and a shade in the midst of the desert. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (through whom all mercy comes), the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us"—yes, that is the word,—"who *comforteth* us in all our tribulation."

This outburst of gratitude was from the heart of the apostle Paul, than whom no man ever experienced greater afflictions. He was "in deaths oft," in stripes, in shipwreck, in imprisonment, in bonds, always "bearing in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus," always carrying upon his person marks of violence which showed his liability to the same violent death which his master had endured. He thus blessed God for the comforts of the Gospel; and this he did not only for his own sake, but for the sake of those to whom he ministered. The trials and consolations which benefitted him were to benefit them also through him. "For whether we be afflicted," he says, "it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation." Paul had special reference here to sufferings endured in the cause of Christ, in which those whom he addressed had a common interest with himself. They were partakers of his sufferings by sympathy and by exposure to the same, and thus they became partakers of his consolation, rejoicing in his deliverance

with renewed confidence in the Lord. And as his perils and afflictions far exceeded theirs, he could with great propriety engage to comfort them in their trials through that same grace by which he had been sustained. He regarded the trials through which he passed almost daily, as a part of his discipline as a teacher of the Gospel; as a needful qualification for an important part of his work—the office of consolation.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, *that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*"

It is to the topic suggested by this latter clause that I propose to direct your attention in the present discourse, viz:

THE TRIALS OF A MINISTER OF CHRIST VIEWED AS QUALIFYING HIM FOR HIS WORK.

I. The personal afflictions of a minister of Christ *bring him to a deeper sense of the value of that Gospel which he preaches to others.* I speak now of the value of the Gospel as a whole, and in a general way. This impression is among the first and the most powerful that are made upon the mind of a Christian by afflictions. Religion is seen in the hour of trial to possess attractions and to yield consolations which the world cannot offer. Afflictions spread a gloom over all the pleasures of the world, or produce in the soul a disrelish for them and a sense of want which these cannot satisfy. Scenes long pleasant and familiar become distasteful when one who has always moved with us among them is taken away; or they yield only the melancholy pleasure of reminding us of the dear departed. We value them for their associations and not for themselves. The house is desolate, though filled with friends, when the chief tenant has departed; the table is empty, though surrounded with guests, when the chief seat is vacant. A feeling of vacuity is produced in the mind which nothing earthly can relieve. Then it is that the fulness of the Gospel is seen; then it is discovered that the heart, though torn open as by the hand of violence, cannot be opened too wide for the grace of God to fill.

The experience of a minister of the Gospel under affliction does not differ in this respect from that of any other Christian. But as with every Christian, a conviction of the transcendent value of the Gospel is necessary to growth in grace and to extensive usefulness, so with the minister it is important, to give fervour and unction in the preaching of the Gospel. Whatever, therefore, goes to strengthen that conviction in his mind gives him a new qualification for his work, or at least a new impulse in it. He believes, indeed, in the preciousness of the Gospel, from his own experience

of its renewing and sanctifying power. If he is sincere, he has undertaken to preach the Gospel from a full conviction that it is the only way of salvation, that it is a gift of priceless value, not to be exchanged for worlds. His great effort as a preacher is to induce men to accept the Gospel, and to live according to it, because he believes this to be the only way of safety and of happiness. The more he studies the Gospel as a system, the more does he see of its perfection. The more he is called in the exercise of his office to exhibit the various truths of the Gospel to the different classes and conditions of men, the more does he learn of its universal adaptation and comprehensive worth. Yet, after all, (such is the imperfection of human nature), this view of the supreme excellence and value of the Gospel may come to be with one who is called continually to present it, too much of an abstraction; an opinion not to be disputed indeed, nor yet to be felt always as a living truth. Christians in general are insensible to the real value of the Gospel, because amid the hurry of business or the excitement of worldly pleasure, they bestow so little thought upon it; but the minister of the Gospel, less exposed to the perverting influence of direct and habitual contact with the world may rest on the other hand in a staid conviction of truths, the value and the power of which he may not be in circumstances to estimate aright. Hence he needs trials to give him fresher views of the Gospel; to place him on another point of observation. Let health fail him, let friends forsake him, let him be left destitute with a growing family around him, let his character be assailed, his motives misconstrued his well-meant endeavours be frustrated, let near and dear relatives be taken from him by death; then with nothing else to lean upon, he discovers that the very Gospel which he has so long preached, and with which he is so conversant is, indeed, his *all:* that through his very famliarity with it he had failed to appreciate many of its beauties, or to realize all its worth. Now, its truths break upon him with the freshness and power of a new revelation. He is in another school. The school of theology and of criticism is important to prepare the preacher for his work. Years may be spent in the profitable study of the orignal tongues of the sacred Scriptures, with a view to the full and correct developement of their meaning. The careful and discriminating study of systems of theology, derived from and based upon the Word of God, is also necessary that the man of God may be "thoroughly furnished." Yet in connection with all this, there is need of a practical discipline in the truth; such, for example, as that of applying the truth to various classes under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit; such especially, as that of applying the truth to one's own heart under various aspects and conditions. In this view the school of affliction is the best school in which to learn the full value of the Gospel. It may better qualify the minister for his work to receive some thorough and painful schooling there.

II. Afflictions serve to qualify a minister more abundantly for the work of preaching the Gospel, *by giving him a livelier perception of certain important but familiar truths.* Thus far I have spoken only of a deeper conviction of the value of the Gospel as a whole. His own afflictions, and those of others with whom he is enabled to sympathize, bring a minister to a deeper sense of the importance of his work as a preacher of the Gospel of the grace of God. But there are certain truths which are brought vividly to mind under affliction. The particular truths vary, of course, with the nature of the affliction. They are such as the following:

Man's entire dependence upon God. This is a truth taught both by reason and the Scriptures. It is a truth to be daily kept before the mind to excite within us gratitude and godly fear. The preacher labors to impress upon his hearers the thought of an ever-present, all-sustaining, all-controlling God. But even his own perception of such a being may need at times to be quickened, and this is done most effectually by means of affliction. Let him who has talked of God's presence and God's power, and of man's dependence upon God, until the very phrases have become natural to his tongue, be suddenly prostrated upon the bed of sickness, his voice silenced, his hand palsied, his strength abated and he will realize what it is to be in the hands of God, to lie completely at his disposal, to live in him. Or let him be called to part with some dear friend—perhaps the dearest on earth, to lay his kindred, his children, his companion, in the grave—and he will feel as he never felt before, his dependence upon God, absolute, entire; dependence for every earthly blessing that remains, dependence for comfort, for life, for *all* that yet is or is hoped for; dependence still when every earthly prop is gone. He will know better how to exhibit that truth after such experience.

Another class of truths impressed upon the mind by such afflictions are *those relating to death and the future world;* the vanity and the uncertainty of life, the nearness, the certainty, *the dreadful certainty* of death. These are among the most frequent topics of pulpit discourse, as they are the most frequent subjects of admonition and exhortation in the Word of God. They are fitted to make a deep impression, and they ought to make a deeper impression than they do. They ought to make men thoughtful and prayerful, and watchful, and diligent; but few realize them as they should. The minister sees the declarations of Scripture upon these points continually verified. He is called to visit the sick and the dying. On any day, at any hour, he is liable to such a call. The house of mourning is to him a familiar place. He sees death under every aspect. He follows to the grave the young and the aged, and those who were in the prime and vigor of life; some who are cut down suddenly, and some who die of lingering disease. He sees the sweet babe laid in that cold bed with the

fresh flowers of spring upon its breast; he sees the wife and mother laid there while husband and children weep around; he sees the husband and father laid there amid the sobs and groans of a helpless family; he sees the lovely, blooming maiden cut down like a flower; he sees the strong and enterprising young man wither and fall.

He goes to the grave from the stately mansion, from soft carpets, and cushioned seats, and tapestried halls, and surrounded with the costliest furniture of grief,—and he goes there from the narrow chamber with its bare floor and naked walls, now rendered thrice desolate. He follows to the grave a friend, a neighbour, a loved one of his own flock; and he follows there a stranger whose countenance, mutely fixed, gives no token of recognition, and asks only to be covered out of sight by the hand of strangers. Such are the scenes of a pastor's life,—scenes from which he often turns aside with an aching heart. And yet they are scenes with which he grows familiar, and is perhaps less keenly affected the more they are repeated. He sees what death is, he mourns what death does, but by degrees he even becomes accustomed to death. He therefore needs at times to view death in another aspect; to realize that death though familiar, is still dreadful; to feel death's icy fingers on his own heart tearing away the loved ones nestling there; to look at the effects of death, not at a distance, but at home. Then death wakes up the soul to own and feel his power. He will not be forgotten; he will not be thought lightly of; he will not be treated as a familiar thing; he will not yield his title or prerogative as the king of terrors. Ah! it is one thing to look upon the stiffened form of a stranger, and another thing to find one who always greeted us with the warm words and kiss of love, all cold and speechless;—it is one thing to offer consolation to a company of mourners, and another thing to be surrounded by one's dearest friends in the garments of woe, and to feel too much need of comfort to offer it to them;—it is one thing to look with pity upon the struggling grief of those who are bidding a last farewell to the poor unconscious clay, and another thing to go trembling and bursting with sorrow to take the last look at what has been so precious in our eyes;—it is one thing to see the coffin closed upon the young, the beautiful, the admired whom we knew not, and another to have it hide from us our dearest treasure; it is one thing to go to the grave officially, as a friend, as a minister, and another thing to go there as a mourner to lay down our precious burden in its cold, dark bed, feeling that we ourselves would lie there too. Oh, Death! *thou art terrible!* Yet terrible as thou art we would *know* thee; we would feel thy most sudden stroke; we would behold thee in the most painful and bewildering contrasts;* that

*The author was reading a cheerful letter which he had just received from his sister, when a telegraphic dispatch was brought him informing him of her sudden and

our souls may be alive to thy presence and and thy power; that we may warn men with becoming earnestness to prepare for thee; that we ourselves may be always prepared for thee; doing our master's work, faithful, deligent, labourious, watchful, "redeeming the time."

The realities of the future world are made nearer and more impressive to the mind of a minister by means of affliction. He is called to contemplate these realities habitually in the regular course of his ministry. His constant endeavour is to bring his hearers to contemplate them also, and to act in view of them. But he often of necessity surveys them at a distance and imperfectly. Affliction brings them near; it shows that they *are* real; it gives them distinctness to the eye of faith; it makes the future everything; it brings the soul in a higher sense than was originally intended, under the full commanding influence of "the powers of the world to come," of the grand facts in relation to the destiny of man.

Such are some of the particular truths or classes of truths which the personal afflictions of a minister bring most vividly before his mind. The effect of a livelier perception of such truths upon his preaching is odvious. We can always preach most powerfully and most efficiently from our own experience. It was the wisdom of God that appointed those who had themselves experienced converting grace to be the instruments of the conversion of others. He who knows nothing personally of regeneration and sanctification, though he may explain theoretically their nature and necessity, cannot describe the process like one who is a subject of it, not urge its importance with the earnestness of a sinner saved. As experience is an essential qualification for exhibiting aright the very rudiments of Christianity, so it is desirable for the right presentation of all subsequent truths. An experimental knowledge of truth, so far as it can be attained, is one of the first qualifications for preaching the Gospel. "All successful preaching is the result of a firm and settled conviction of the truth of the Gospel." "We believe," says Paul, "and therefore speak." How earnestly did Peter insist upon the divine authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, because he had been an "eye witness of his majesty" upon the mount of transfiguration! How eloquently did Isaiah and Paul depict the glories of Jehovah's presence, because the lips of the one had been touched with a live coal from the very altar before the throne, and the other had been "caught up into the third

alarming illness. He hastened to the cars and reached Philadelphia the same evening, only to realize the dreadful import of the words, "too late!" She who was next to him in age, his playmate in childhood, his companion in Christian race, whose happy home he had lately visited, whose fond words he had just read, was already gone. With her family cheerful and well at the breakfast table and the domestic altar, at noon summoned away without giving a word or look of recognition even to *him*—the nearest and dearest—who stood by her side!

heaven!" Though Paul had seen and heard "things unutterable," things which human language could not describe, how did their influence pervade all his writings, and all his acts; how did his tongue glow when he approached this theme with an eloquence which the thorn in his flesh could not impede.

He who has been rescued from a drunkard's grave can utter warnings and appeals to those who are in like danger, to which those who have never had such a dreadful experience, are wholly inadequate. And how much more eager are we to hear a narrative of danger from one who has escaped it, than from those who repeat it at second hand! Just so it is in preaching. Experience is one secret of power. Truth worked into the soul, as it were, by the fire and the hammer; truth which a man knows and believes in the fullest sense, is the truth that is preached with earnestness and power, and not that which is picked up on the surface of books. Now, affliction brings the minister into the closest contact with some of the most important truths, yea, welds them into his soul as by fire and hammer, and so confers, as it were, a new gift for preaching. His people will hear of his afflictions. Not that he is to preach about them to awaken sympathy; not that he is to bring private griefs before the public (though when no longer private, he may speak of his afflictions as Paul did, to glorify God, and to enforce the lessons of Providence), but that truth will come out of the furnace into which the soul has been cast, burning with new lustre. "If we be afflicted it is for your sakes."

III. *The personal afflictions of a minister qualify him to sympathize with the afflicted.* This he is called to do continually, and it is one of the most tender and inviting, useful, and yet delicate and difficult duties of his office. Sympathy is always sweet to those who are in affliction. If we cannot help them, it is pleasant to them to know that we feel for them. God sympathizes with his children in all their troubles. He was the Saviour of Israel. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him."

Jesus is a sympathizing Saviour. It is one of the most interesting features in the work of redemption that the Son of God participated in the trials and sufferings of humanity, that he might sympathize with us and succour us according to our need. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same:—for it behoved him in all things to be made like to his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to

make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." He has put himself upon a level with us in this regard, that he may be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Sympathy is always more full and more welcome when it comes from one who can enter into our feelings from his own experience; who can take us by the hand and say, "My brother, I know what this is; God hath called me to a like trial, I can weep with you, I can feel for you." We understand such language; we can interpret the glistening eye and the faltering tongue; it is language which goes right to the heart; and there is a strange comfort in this companionship in sorrow. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus; he was moved with compassion at the sight of the widow of Nain; and it was this deep heartfelt sympathy that gave such strength and richness to his words of comfort. The minister of Christ, called to visit the afflicted, needs some experience of affliction that he may truly sympathize with and comfort them.

IV. Afflictions qualify a minister for his work, *by acquainting him fully with the consolations of the Gospel.* These he is expected to administer to others. He is called upon in seasons of affliction to be not so much a mourner as a comforter; not only to sympathize with the sorrowing, but to console them. This is a sweet office—the office of the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of Christ. But to do this in the best manner, the minister needs himself to have tasted the consolations of the Gospel in seasons of affliction. As in guiding the inquiring, he draws upon his own experience to more advantage than upon any theory, so in consoling the afflicted, the teachings of his own heart will be found better than the teachings of books. It is a wonderful trait of the Gospel, and a proof of its divine origin, that it adapts itself to all the circumstances of our being, so that in whatever condition we are placed, we find something written as it were expressly for us in that condition. Emphatically is this true of the afflictions of life. There is a remarkable adaptation in the Gospel to these in all their variety. The sick, the bereaved, the poor, the forsaken, the widow, the fatherless, all find their cases singled out for advice, and comfort, and support. There are promises "exceedingly great and precious," the full import of which we cannot know till we are in the circumstances which they were designed to meet; there are offers of grace the magnitude and worth of which we cannot realize till we are in the state of those to whom they are addressed. It seems as if so much of the Bible is written for the afflicted, that one can know but little of its precious contents until he is afflicted. So many of its promises are made to those in trouble, that the believer scarce knows half of his inheritance until trouble comes upon him. The Gospel abounds in consolation. It speaks peace to the

troubled soul, whether tossed by its own fears or by tempests from without. As he who preaches it should know the relief it brings to the guilty and troubled conscience, so is it well for him to know the consolation which it brings in trials from without. "In the world," saith the Master, "ye shall have tribulation; *but be of good cheer*, I have overcome the world."

Look at the topics of consolation which the Gospel suggests; topics suited to every variety of trial. First and chief of all we have the thought presented in every possible form, that *afflictions come from the hand of our Heavenly Father, and will conduce eventually to our highest good.* I stop not here for nice distinctions between those events of life in which the will of God is directly and actively concerned, and those in which it is as it were but passive and permissive. I stop not to meet either the cavils of the sceptic, or the perplexities of the honest inquirer, as to the concurrence of human volitions and the divine purpose in a large class of events which bring with them more or less of evil. All such topics, too extended to be now discussed, may be, and often have been disposed of with ease and satisfaction. I take now the great and comprehensive fact, as plain as any fact of Scripture, that the trials of God's people come from his hand, and are for their good; and I say there is solid comfort in that fact. Oh! it were terrible to think of the bereavements and the various afflictions to which we are liable, as coming by rude chance or stern fatality; or to know that we were left to the "tender mercies" of cruel men. But I can bear to be afflicted when my Father in love and tenderness chastens me "for my own profit," that I may become "a partaker of his holiness;" I can bear that my worldly prospects should be darkened when that which overshadows them is the hand of mercy reaching down from heaven to draw me thither. I may not know *why* I am afflicted—neither does my child know why I deny him some coveted pleasure—but what I know not now, I shall know hereafter; and of this I am assured that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God." That broad and comprehensive declaration covers every possible case of trial. It is a place for solid rest.

Another topic of consolation suited to the particular case of the loss of Christian friends, is *the immortality of the soul*—which, foreshadowed by the ancient philosophy, was brought to *light* in the Gospel. That is a doctrine of precious comfort. We lay the body in the grave—but we cannot feel that our friend is there. We shed tears over it; but the man weeps—not the Christian. We look down into the grave, but our eyes will not be fixed there; we think of the grave—but our thoughts will not dwell there; there is nothing in the grave to draw them or to keep them; every thing is gloomy and repulsive; but they go bounding away after the spirit that is not dead—no—*not dead*—after the loved one who

yet lives, and is to live for ever; and presently we forget all grief, and are exulting over death and the grave. And all this is warranted by the Gospel; is a part of the consolation which it gives. Yet it is but a part—for there is a third topic of consolation which is inexhaustible It is the assurance, yes, *the absolute assurance of the safety of the good.* They are "with the Lord;" they are "satisfied with God's likeness;" they have joys which we cannot fathom nor describe. We sink overpowered with the attempt to measure their bliss.

These are but specimens of the topics of consolation furnished in the Gospel. With all these the minister is of course familiar. He receives these various truths upon divine testimony, and applies them to the cases of his hearers. But when he himself is afflicted, he learns *how* precious and consoling they are; and is able to comfort others because he himself "is comforted of God."

Moreover, there is a sustaining grace imparted to the believer under trials which must be felt in order to be known. It is "the peace of God that passeth understanding." It is "the love of Christ that passeth knowledge." The arm of the Almighty is under the sinking spirit; the soul seems to be going down under the sea of trouble, when lo! it finds itself upon a rock—broad, firm, and enduring. Then it *knows* the consolation that it is in Christ, and with this experience it becomes as an angel of mercy to all who are in sorrow. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

It is with somewhat of this experience, my hearers, that I am called to stand before you to-day. It seems as if a new leaf of the Bible was opened to me, as if I had discovered a new mine of precious jewels, and I must hasten to inform you of it. I address myself first to mourners. Dear friends, I have often felt for you in your afflictions, and have tried to comfort you; but I have never sympathised with you as I now can and do; and yet I have never felt so much like consoling you as I do to-day. Myself a mourner, I bring you comfort—sweet comfort—"even the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Behold the consolations of the Gospel, the abounding grace of God, and turn to him who lives to succour and to save you. My office as a comforter will become more and more important the longer I shall continue to be your pastor, and I thank God if in any manner I can be prepared for it. I must expect to be called into your families in times of trial; where now I find nothing but joy, I shall soon find the deepest sorrow. I shall find you mourning the loss of dear friends; I shall find you, one and another, on the bed of sickness and of death; but I have comfort laid up in store for you against all these trials.

And yet I fear that some of you will not receive that comfort. You who will not accept the Gospel can know nothing of its consolations in affliction. Sorrows will come upon you, but you will have no comfort. You who will not accept the Gospel now—in health, in the time of God's gracious visitation, may not possess its hope in death, nor leave that hope to console your friends. Alas! that in my ministrations among this dear people, I should ever be called to pity those whom I cannot comfort, and to go to the grave sorrowing with those "who have no hope." Will you not, in this world of trial and of death, accept this Gospel of the grace of God? I do testify to you this day that it is true. I *know* that it is true. I know that its consolations are real. I know that its promises are sure. Take the word of a poor sinner who has tried this way of forgiveness and of life, take the word of a poor mourner who has tried this source of consolation, take the word of a dying man who has just seen death and the grave vanquished by this Gospel—or rather take God's Word, believe the Gospel, cling to it in the midst of this sinning, suffering world; cling to it as your only hope, till God shall come for your deliverance, till he shall take you to be with himself, and shall wipe all your tears away.

SERMON CCCCXLVI.

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ELEMENTS AND EVIDENCES OF PROSPERITY IN CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS.

Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. Acts ix. 31.

Here is a description of spiritual prosperity which attended the Church of Christ at an early period of its history. The churches here referred to had one common origin, professed the same faith, and were united under one head. They were composed of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and were associated in the bonds of Christian fellowship, and for the observance of religious worship and ordinances. After having been subjected to much annoyance from open persecution, they enjoyed a season of rest and were edified. As persecution ceased, and they were permitted to

enjoy the means of grace, and attend upon the ordinances of religion without hindrance or molestation, they were *built up* in the faith, and were greatly prospered. The nature and degree of that prosperity are indicated by the remaining part of the description here given of their state, viz: and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

This describes a large measure of prosperity, and presents these ancient congregations of Christians as patterns and ensamples of the characters and conditions which churches in all subsequent time should seek to attain. The fact that they were edified, implies that they were profited by the means and privileges which they enjoyed—and that it mainly refers to spiritual edification, we may very naturally infer from their walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. As when in another instance which is described as spiritual prosperity, in which believers continued daily with one accord in the temple, praising God and having favor with all people—it is said, the Lord added daily to the church of such as should be saved.*

This subject is one to which we may profitably direct our attention. It brings up the question, in what does the real prosperity of a congregation consist? Or what are the spiritual elements of that prosperity which every Christian congregation should most desire, and at which it ought most assiduously to aim?

And this is all indicated in the true import of our text, to which we have already referred, and may be summed up in a few words. As the true prosperity of the church consists mainly in the piety of the church, as manifested by its members individually and collectively—so the real prosperity of a congregation may be said to depend mainly upon the same thing. And there is no substantial and abiding prosperity without it. And this characteristic may be said to be predominant, wherever a church is edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost is multiplied.

But it may be well for us to look at some of the particulars implied in this general description.

I. *These churches had rest.* It may well be accounted a great favor to enjoy freedom from open persecution, and to live in the peaceful possession and enjoyment of the external privileges of the Gospel and of religious worship, and the means of grace which are of divine appointment. Many times, and at different periods, and in different countries, it has not been so; but the fires of persecution have been lighted up, and Christians, the true worshippers of the only living and true God, have been forced into banishment and exile—to betake themselves to secluded vales or mountain fastnesses—to fly from

* Acts ii. 47.

the rage and malice of an atheistical world—or doomed to witness the firm and unwavering profession of their faith amidst the flames of a painful but glorious martyrdom. But with us, and in this part of Chrstendom—thanks be to Him who has caused the lines to fall to us in pleasant places, and has given to us a goodly heritage, it is not so. We live in an age and in a country where the rights of conscience are asserted and maintained, are well defined and understood.

And we know of no position more just and liberal, or more according to truth, than that which is established as a fundamental principle in that portion of the Christian church of which we constitute a part, viz: that "God alone is Lord of the conscience; and hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith and worship. Therefore we consider the rights of private judgment in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable; we do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power further than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time be equal and common to all others." By the constitution of our church, it is maintained that "every Christian church, or union, or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualification of its ministers and members as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed." It asserts that "truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness according to our Savior's rule, By their fruits ye shall know them"—that "the holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners, that no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their authority, and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God."

And what is the church as defined in this constitution? "It is composed of all those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make a profession of the holy religion of Christ and of submission to his laws. But as this immense multitude cannot meet together in one place to hold communion and to worship God—it is reasonable and warranted by Scripture example, that they should be divided into many particular churches;" and a particular church, as here defined, "consists of a number of professing Christians with their offspring, voluntarily associated for divine worship and godly living, agreeably to the holy Scriptures, and submitting to a certain form of government."

These statements are contained in the Confession of Faith, under the head of Government and preliminary Principles. They assert and maintain true liberty of conscience, and present such views as are in entire accordance with the true spirit of Christianity, and with the most elevated standard of spiritual light and freedom.

Under the influence of such principles, we exist and enjoy an exemption from persecution, on account of our adherence to any particular form of doctrine or mode of worship which we may conscientiously adopt. Our constitution of civil government breathes the same spirit, and happily falls in with the prevailing sentiment of the age, especially where the principles of protestant Christianity have an ascendancy over the darkness and dogmatism of the Papacy.

The contrast between what is, and what has been at some periods and in some countries, may well inspire us with an emotion of gratitude to the great disposer of events, by whose guardian care we are so highly exalted. There may be little rivalships of sects and of district associations, formed for the same end; and there may be occasional ebullitions and manifestations of wrong and unhallowed feeling and action, in opposition to the interests and well being of a particular church, growing out of human infirmity; but there is no arm of persecution or violence raised to destroy, to terrify, or to molest the church in the peaceful enjoyment of its privileges. But this is not all that is requisite to true and substantial prosperity. The churches referred to in our text not only had rest, but

II. *They were edified.* This edification is a term of comprehensive signification, and implies *advancement* in purity and strength, as well as mere religious enjoyment. The church established upon the foundation of prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, seeks for edification, and obtains it from the appointed means, through that ministry which is declared to be instituted or given for that purpose; *i. e.* for the edification of the body of Christ. This end may be obtained in different degrees. But to whatever extent it may be attained by individual members or the whole church, it consists in an increase of knowledge and understanding of the divine will, and of conformity to it; in progressive sanctification; in the experience of evident benefit derived from the word and ordinances, and spiritual satisfaction and delight in them, when the word preached, "being mixed with faith," is actually profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, and for instruction in righteousness.

It is well, however, to look at the nature of this edification, and to understand well what it is. It is not merely being pleased with eloquence or argument, or logical deductions ingeniously drawn out and exhibited: it is not the effect which arises from the exhibition of startling novelties, or the visions of an exuberant fancy. But it is being edified by *the truth* comprised in the great doctrines of the Bible—doctrines which are according to godliness, and which unfold the character and attributes of God, his holy requirements, and the offices, and work, and mediatorial character of the great

Redeemer. The effect is to make them more humble and obedient and self-denying, and to lead them to walk circumspectly, to cherish the faith that overcomes the world to seek first the kingdom of God, and to live in all things consistently with their professions. This is spiritual edification. It is Scriptural. It is being edified by the truth and the ordinances of religion, through the divine blessing, producing their proper and legitimate effects. It is no mere transient excitement of the feelings, soon passing away, and leaving the heart estranged from God, and under the dominion of worldliness; but leading to an intelligent, decided, and consistent practical piety in all the varied walks of life. When a church is thus edified, it loves the truth, and its members desire the sincere, or pure, unadulterated milk of the word, that they may grow thereby, and they attend upon its ministrations that they may hear it and receive it with meekness, and like the noble Bereans, they will be apt to search the Scriptures for themselves, and even daily to see if these things which they are taught in the sanctuary are verily so.

III. *They walked in the fear of the Lord.* This language is expressive of decided piety. It implies that they cherished an abiding sense of his presence, always remembering that his omniscient eye was upon them, and acting under a becoming sense of their solemn accountability to Him. This is of itself an evidence that they were edified, and were making a right improvement of their privileges. To walk in the fear of the Lord is a mark of heavenly wisdom. Indeed, the fear of the Lord is declared to be the very beginning of wisdom—and it may in fact be said to comprise all that belongs to a character of consistent piety. For it implies such reverence and love for the true God, as are connected with the fear of offending him by the transgression of his laws. That church is truly edified whose members bear this character, so as to be living epistles, known and read of all men. It will be manifest that the love of God is verily shed abroad in their hearts, by their holy life and conversation—by departing from evil and cleaving to that which is good, and by their avoiding even the appearance of evil. They will practise no deception. They will renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, and live soberly, righteously and godly in the world; and that they do so, is an evidence that they are partakers of the grace that bringeth salvation. For it is that grace which teaches them thus to live; and being thus taught, they will avoid the sinful levities which are incompatible with a religious profession. They will worship God in the family; they will seek him in the retirement of the closet; they will not forsake the assembling of themselves together for social prayer and religious intercourse and worship. They will keep in mind the obligations of the solemn covenant relation which they sustain

to God; and remembering that they were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ, they will aim to glorify him, in their bodies and spirits which are his. All this is fully implied in walking in the fear of the Lord. Such a church is happy and prosperous. Its members will avoid evil speaking and a rash and censorious judgment of others; they will live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with them.

IV. Another evidence of the prosperous and happy condition of these churches, is that *they walked in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.* A church possessing the character or marks above described, most evidently enjoys the presence of the Divine Spirit, for these very things are the fruits of his work upon the heart. He is called the Comforter, and was promised as the source and producer of spiritual life, and light and comfort. To walk as is here described, is to live in the enjoymeut of his presence and his gracious influences. Where his presence is realized, the fruits of rightousness abound; and no church can be edified or prospered without that presence. When the members of a church do not walk in the fear of the Lord, they grieve away the Holy Spirit, and are left to darkness, and barrenness, and unfruitfulness; and whatever other comforts they may have, they are destitute of the comforts of religion. The only way in which these comforts can be enjoyed is the way in which the Holy Spirit would lead. It is only to them who are in Christ, and who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit that there is no condemnation. The influences of the Spirit are enjoyed by those churches, whose members are found walking in the fear of the Lord, and maintaining a conversation that becometh the Gospel. We can easily see that when the members of a church are edified and walk in the fear of the Lord, there is just that state of things in which the Spirit delights, and there his manifestations will be realized. His comforts are the realizations of the precious promises that God will be with his people and bestow upon them peace such as the world cannot give, causing all things to work together for their good, while they walk in the light of that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and cherish that hope which is an anchor to the soul.

This is to be truly blessed. How happy must be the condition of that church which is thus highly favored; how signal the blessedness which is implied in the enjoyment of that Spirit whose gracious influences keep alive the flame of devotion and of love; and how much to be deprecated as a token of the Divine displeasure must be regarded the withdrawment of these heavenly influences! Without them, the sense of obligation is greatly impaired, love waxes cold, devotion dies, and hope expires. The form of godliness may remain, but the power is gone. Walking in the

comfort of the Holy Spirit is eminently to enjoy the comforts of religion, and to know experimentally what are the strong consolations of those who fly for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them in the Gospel. This was the happy and prosperous condition of those ancient churches, and such has been that of many since. Would that it were so with all the churches even now.

V. And it is added, *They were multiplied.* This is the natural consequence of such a state of things as has been described. Such a church is as a city set on a hill, whose light cannot be hid. Its individual members cause their light so to shine that others learn to glorify their Father in heaven. When religion is thus seen in its proper light, and its divine power and energy are exemplified in the lives of its professors, then the appropriate influence of the church is exerted in bringing others into its fold. Its number is increased. And this is always regarded as desirable, and is that which we ought to desire, and for which we ought to pray, that the number of those who join themselves unto the Lord in an everlasting covenant may be constantly multiplied. And when a church is in such a state as that which we have described, it is best prepared to receive others into its fellowship, and to say to the impenitent and careless ones around them, come with us and we will do you good. The substantial benefit of those who come into the communion of the church is most effectually secured, when the standard of piety is what it ought to be. And it is then that a church appears in its most inviting and alluring aspect—and the voice of the Bride, in unison with that of the Spirit, is heard saying, Come; and then it is, that many are constrained to come and drink freely of the water of life. Thus a Church is multiplied.

From our subject we may see what objects ought to be chiefly aimed at and kept in view, in order to secure the most substantial abiding prosperity of a congregation.

1. It is not wealth, though this may be highly important as a means of promoting good ends, if rightly used in subserviency to those great interests which religion is designed to secure. But wealth, without the disposition to use it aright, may be of no avail, but on the other hand may be a hindrance to the progress of piety, and operate, by its ensnaring and engrossing influence, to keep down the piety of individuals, and prevent that spiritual life and vigor, and that devotion to the interests of vital religion, which constitute the most essential elements of true prosperity. But the fact that it may be and often is so, does not prove that it necessarily *must be so.* It may be and is sometimes otherwise; and wealth will be, according to the depth and strength of the piety of its possessors, employed in subserviency to these objects which the welfare of the congregation and the interests of religion may re-

quire. And it will be used for such purposes as far as is necessary, whenever and wherever the standard of piety is such as we have here delineated; and there, too, we may reasonably expect that means as well as numbers will be increased. But even if means be comparatively limited, it will be found that if the interests of piety be properly regarded, there will be no lack of whatever may be needful to attain within reasonable limits, every object that is desirable. If there be first, the willing mind, a way will be open. But wealth although important, yet without religion, is far from constituting or securing the true prosperity which every congregation should seek to attain.

2. The fact that great numbers are added to the church is not always a sure indication of real prosperity. There are, or may be instances in which the reverse is true, and in which an increase of numbers brings along with it weakness instead of strength. The debilitated and sickly condition of many congregations and churches at the present day, affords an exemplification of the fact. This may have arisen, in some instances, from an over anxiety to increase the *number*, without a due regard to the *qualifications* of members of a church, when amidst scenes of high excitement, many have been gathered in, who, like the seed springing up in stony places, having no root in themselves, soon wither away. They do not grow up to maturity, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance. They do not seem to abide in Christ, nor He in them, and therefore they remain unfruitful. For the Saviour has said, As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Suppose one hundred men should be added to a church, a considerable portion of whom should, after having gained admission, never worship God in their families; and never attend a meeting for prayer and social worship observed by the church except on the Sabbath, and perhaps even that only occasionally; and should be just as worldly as other men are, living equally in the neglect of the peculiar and appropriate duties of a religious profession. Or, suppose the church to be already composed in part, or to a considerable extent, of members possessing this character. In the former case, you only add to the amount of imbecility, and in the latter, you already have weakness instead of strength. It is not a temple after the similitude of *that*, which is composed of *lively stones*, built up a spiritual house, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Such a church cannot be said to be truly edified, or to be walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. And under such circumstances it is not likely to be multiplied; or if it should be, without a decided moral renovation, a spiritual resurrection of the dead that are already in it, an increase of its numbers might be a *disastrous* instead

of a *prosperous* event. And why? Because we may have reason to expect that those who enter the church will be generally conformed to the standard of its piety, whatever it may be. If that is low, theirs will be likely to be so. If it be more elevated, their character and usefulness will be modified more or less according to it. And then, if it be true that new additions to the church will only increase the deadening influence of spiritual declension, it would be disastrous to the cause of religion, and render still more powerless and ineffectual upon the impenitent and worldly, the means of grace, and the instrumentality which is employed for their conversion by the ministry of the Gospel.

You may sometimes see in a particular church, a few, and it may be a *very* few, of its members who are alive and awake to the responsibilities of their Christian vocation, while a far greater number, the *many* are buried in spiritual slumber, and walking mainly according to the course of this world, caring little or nothing for the dangers or the destiny of those who are emphatically without God and without hope. And this is little to be wondered at, while both seem to be walking so nearly in the same path, and the way to heaven seems to have so little divergence from that which leadeth to destruction. But when the church is truly edified—built up—walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, it is not so. Then it will be multiplied to some purpose, and wandering sinners of every description actually returning from the error of their way, will crowd the gates of Zion with thankful songs for their deliverance from the delusions of sin and from spiritual death. As doves to their windows, will they fly to Him who is a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest. Then it is seen and felt that the great Deliverer who has come out of Zion is actually exerting his great power, and that He is mighty to save. Then is there a realization of true prosperity; of substantial growth and of abiding strength—strength in the Lord.

3. We are led here to remark that it cannot be regarded as a favorable sign in regard to any particular congregation, when a union with it is thought to be desirable, because it has the reputation of a low standard of piety, and is supposed to be less strict in its views of religious duty and obligation. Some have been known to express a decided preference for a particular church for this very reason, that the preaching was of a lax and liberal character, and not calculated to disturb the worldly mind; that to indulge in vain amusements was not regarded as inconsistent with a religious profession, and that on the whole there is not much religion there. This we have known to be the common estimate of a whole denomination of Christians, and not unfrequently of particular churches. A man has been known to say, "I have no religion or attachment to any particular creed, but if I must unite

with any society, I prefer such a one (naming a particular denomination), for I think they are nearest to it, *i. e.* to not having any religion, of any within my knowledge." But such accessions for such a reason could add nothing to the strength or prosperity of any congregation, and the fact that such views are entertained of it is evidence enough of its weakness. Far, very far should it be from any church or congregation to desire such a reputation, or to possess such a character. With such a character it cannot be truly prosperous, and ought not to be. It should aim, therefore, to change its character and put on strength, such as comes only from a vital union with the great Head of the church, and seek to be adorned with the beauties of holiness.

4. It may be readily inferred from our subject that every church, and each individual member of it, should aim at a high standard of piety. This is ever the foundation of real prosperity. Let this be the controlling spirit, and the fruits of righteousness abound, and all other deficiencies will be supplied. If the claims of religion are allowed, there will be no backwardness in doing whatever may be necessary to be done to promote its interests and sustain and extend its influence, or in exercising whatever self-denial may be requisite for the maintenance of religious order and worship. And why should any church, or individual member of it, be content with that which is low, when that which is more elevated will secure the best results; the substantial comforts which do not grow in nature's barren soil, and without which earth is but a dreary waste, a desolate wilderness? How strange and how wonderful, that Christians should be living, or wish to live, so far beneath their privileges, and fail to enjoy the rich and abounding consolations which a firm and devoted and consistent piety only can impart, and which it cannot fail to give!

5. How clearly is the connexion between walking in the fear of the Lord and the enjoyment of the presence of the Holy Spirit indicated by our subject! And it enforces with solemn emphasis the divine admonition, Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. It calls upon every friend of the Redeemer in every church, to walk circumspectly, redeeming the time; to awake to righteousness and put on the whole armor of God, and to be renewed in the spirit of his mind. The consequences depending upon it are beyond all computation. The Spirit grieved away, and then what is there but the form of godliness without the power? The Spirit gone, and what becomes of fervent piety; of communion with God; and of the hope which is an anchor to the soul? The Spirit grieved away, and where are the life and power of religion; and how certainly onward to despair is the course of sinners, who are still walking according to that Spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience?

And why is not that blessed Spirit working with a mightier energy in subduing the hearts of those who are dead in sin, and raising them to spiritual life, causing the churches to be multiplied and to be adorned with the beauties of holiness? Let the conscience answer according to the light which our subject unfolds, and every friend of the Saviour take heed to his ways accordingly. If it be true, as suggested by a distinguished and honored servant of God, that the Spirit is not wont to grant his more distinguishing favors where they are not desired, it would be well for those by whom they are not enjoyed, to consider carefully what are their feelings and their desires in relation to a subject of such momentous importance; whether the glorious manifestations of his reviving presence are truly desired, so that with self-denying importunity they are prepared to ask, that they may receive this inestimable blessing. Without it, what is life, but as the troubled sea whose waters cast up mire and dirt; with it, there is rest for the weary and heavy laden—a rest which is but a faint emblem of that above, and which is eternal. And that blessing is your heavenly Father more ready to bestow, than earthly parents to give good gifts unto their children. Let it be sought with diligence, and the desert shall bud and blossom as the rose, and solitary places shall become vocal with the praise of God.

SERMON CCCCXLVII.

BY THE LATE REV. DANIEL A. CLARK.

THE FOUR LEPERS.

Why sit we here until we die?—2 KINGS vii. 3.

DURING the time that Ben-hadad, king of Syria, was engaged in besieging Samaria, there was a great famine in Samaria. There were four lepers at the entering in of the gate, who, by the laws of their land, were forbidden to mingle with the populace. In their extremity they consulted together what course they should pursue. There were three courses before them.

In the first place, they might return into the city. But the famine was as sore upon the people there as upon the four lepers at the gate. The city was reduced to the last stage of desperation. Mothers boiled their own children for food. "An ass's

head was sold for four-score pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver." They surely had little to hope for, being themselves miserable outcasts from society, bereft of friends and of sympathy.

In the second place, they might stay where they were. But doing this, they were sure that a few days must carry them off by a dreadful death. They must die alone in their separate houses, with none to smoothe their dying pillow or to wet their lips in their last agonies. They must die *lepers*, than which hardly any fate is more to be dreaded.

In the third place, they might "fall unto the host of the Syrians." But what sympathy could they expect from the enemies of their country? Especially *as lepers*, how could they hope to be received in the camp of the Syrians? It was indeed as a last resort, in their desperation, that they resolved to throw themselves upon the tender mercies of the Syrian soldiery. How unbounded must have been their joy when, on reaching the enemy's encampments, they found them deserted; when gold and raiment, and horses and asses, were there abandoned by their affrighted owners; and above all, when they were able to enter iuto the tents, to eat and drink, and stay the famine which was so rapidly destroying them.

This interesting narrative suggests a few remarks which I hope may be useful in exhibiting the dilemma in which *awakened sinners* find themselves. They often feel pressed with the dangers which beset them, and being reluctant to come directly to the Lamb of God, they look in every direction in the hope of safety. Yet there is only one course which will enable them to realize their hopes, and escape the woe they would shun.

1. In the first place, *they may not return to their former state of stupidity*. As well might the lepers have gone for food to the starving city from which they were exiled by the curse which was on them. The awakened sinner sees too plainly that his former condition was one of increasing guilt and danger. Returning to it would grieve the Holy Spirit, whereby he is to be sealed as an heir of Heaven. Returning to his former state, he would harden his heart against the influences of the Gospel.

2. *Nor may they remain in their present state.* It is too miserable. Few men are more wretched than the sinner awakened to a view of his guilt and danger. A consuming fire is kindled within him. Rest he cannot find. Sleep flies from him. He cannot survive the agitations which heave his bosom, unless they are soon quieted. If it were not that men do escape from the power of conviction, either by repentance and faith in Christ, or by a return to stupidity, who can tell how often reason would be dethroned? It is no argument against religion that there are so many cases of insanity from religious excitement; it only shows the power of

eternal things to agitate the breast of a sinful man. No soul can be made sensible of its own true character, without excitement being produced.

3. *Nor may awakened sinners go over to the open enemies of God.* Some do this, but it is a sad resort indeed for the quickened conscience. What a way to quiet those forbodings of wrath is it to shut the eyes and rush madly forward in sin, thus treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath! What an escape from conviction it is to return to the world, mingle in its gaities, become buried in its cares, to worship its god; and thus put off for a season, what will come sooner or later with ten fold more vehemence.

REMARKS.

1. *How critical the condition of the awakened sinner!* Every avenue that opens before him leads on to greater woe, except that one in which he is least inclined to walk. All the refuges to which he would resort are insecure. If he goes into them he will be destroyed in their overthrow.

2. *What madness do men exhibit who seek peace elsewhere than at the foot of the Cross!* How loudly does the voice of wisdom proclaim their folly! How plainly does death exhibit their blindness! What awful hazard they run to buy a momentary respite from convictions which must return as sure as there is to be a day of judgment!

3. *What a congregation of suicides there will be at the last tribunal.* There will be the young lady who drowned her convictions in the gaieties of that party which she meant should be her last, but at which she caught the cold that resulted in her sudden death. There will be the young man, who filled his mind with business, or who increased his frivolities, or who ventured an oath, or a jest at sacred things, thus at a single blow grieving the Spirit, destroying the last hope of his soul, and commencing a career of vice and ruin.

4. *How blessed the invitation of the Gospel!* "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Here is the only safe refuge from the crushing weight of sin, and from the distracting excitement of a quickened conscience.

5. *How unutterably miserable will be the condition of the sinner awakened in perdition to an endless, hopeless conviction of his alienation from God!* If a day or week of conviction here, is so exciting, so fearfully oppressive and distracting to the mind, what will the sinner do when this misery will be increased a thousandfold, and be unending. "Say, O awakened sinner, who art just now deliberating whether to obey or to resist the Spirit, though now you may abuse God with impunity, *Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee?*"

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THE BELIEVER'S CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL.

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.—ROMANS I., 16.

THIS Epistle was addressed by St. Paul to the Christians at Rome, which was then the splendid and voluptuous capital of the world, and the grand fountain of all the errors and superstitions by which mankind were deluded and enslaved. He had already promulgated the salvation of Jesus in many other important cities; and glorious was the success which had attended his labors. But this could not satisfy that sacred ambition which was constantly urging him on to new efforts, and to more extended triumphs. He was animated by a fervent desire to "preach the Gospel at Rome also," that he might impart to the believers there "some spiritual gift," for the increase of their religious stability and comfort; and that he might gather, from the ranks of the unconverted, precious "fruits" of his ministry, as he had done "among other Gentiles." And although, in the providence of God, this desire was not at that time fulfilled, yet was he subsequently permitted to visit the field for which he so earnestly longed—not, indeed, as he here prays, by "a prosperous journey"—but through a series of perils and sufferings,—and to enter it, as an "ambassador of Christ," it is true—but an ambassador in bonds.

In our text, the apostle assigns the cause of his readiness to preach the Gospel at Rome. It sprang from his entire confidence in the truth, the excellency, and the power of the divine doctrines which he was commissioned to teach. He was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Although he knew it to be simple and unostentatious in its structure, with no imposing rites, or august ceremonial, to overawe the sense of men; and although he was well

aware that by the learned and great of this world it was accounted "foolishness;" yet, such was his perfect persuasion of its inherent wisdom and might, that he was prepared fearlessly to proclaim it, even in the celebrated metropolis of civilization and refinement; where pagan science boasted of its exploits, and false philosophy gloried in its strength; where wealth and pomp and imperial power lent their patronage to vice and pollution; where the altars of a hundred deities smoked with perpetual incense, and idolatry sat enthroned in her thousand temples.

But this undoubting assurance of the worth and verity of the Gospel was not peculiar to the apostle; nor was it confined to those who, in that age, shared in his evangelical labors and sacrifices. It is the privilege of believers at all times, and under every aspect which the religion of Christ, in its onward course, may exhibit. The sincere disciple of our own day, who has received "the truth as it is in Jesus," and experienced, in his heart and life, its renovating and purifying energies, can repose the same unfaltering trust in its value and efficacy, and in its celestial origin, as a scheme, and the only scheme, provided by the Almighty for the salvation of men. The text, therefore, presents, as the subject of discourse, the following proposition:

The believer has no cause to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

I. *He has no cause to be ashamed of its Author.* The plan of the Gospel was devised and appointed, in the councils of eternity, by God the Father; but it was introduced and carried into effect by Christ the Son. He is, therefore, its immediate Author. Accordingly, it is denominated in the text, "the Gospel of Christ." To him its execution and administration were specially committed. He came down from Heaven to make those revelations of the divine will which it contains. He taught its perfect precepts. He procured, by his obedience and death, its boundless provisions of mercy. And he offered the all-sufficient expiation for sin, which constitutes its leading feature, and most essential element.

Now, of the illustrious Being, who was thus the founder of the Christian system, there is no reason to be ashamed. It is true, that the circumstances of humiliation in which he appeared in our world, and the reproach and ignominy attending the manner of his departure from it, have ever been regarded by human pride with disgust and scorn. But never was contempt so misplaced. Though born in obscurity, and cradled in want, yet was he the Son of God, and the Lord from Heaven; and around the lowly manger in which he lay, there shone a lustre brighter than all the splendor of palaces, and the magnificence of kings. And his death, viewed in its momentous bearings on the government of God, and on the eternal welfare of men, so far from being a scene of shame and degradation, was the very highest display of glory and majesty.

Notwithstanding the profound abasement to which he submitted, everything connected with his character and with his history was worthy of the loftiest regard and reverence.

If we consider him merely in his human nature, and contemplate the various and consummate excellences which he exhibited, we shall perceive the most ample grounds for confidence and exultation in him. Think of the perfect wisdom which he manifested in all his teachings and actions; of his unparalleled meekness under injury and persecution; of the spotless purity of his life, which not even his bitterest enemies could assail; of the entire devotion to his Father's will, and the absorbing regard for eternal things, which marked all his feelings and conduct; and of that sublime, matchless benevolence, which prompted him to unceasing efforts in doing good to the bodies and the souls of men, which led him to the sorrows of Gethsemane, and the tortures of the cross, and caused him even there to pray for the murderers that spiked his limbs, and mocked his agonies. Is this a character of which to be ashamed? What parallel to it can be found among all the sages, philosophers, and reformers, that ever arose on earth. They all partook of the corruption common to humanity, and many of them were remarkable for their vices. Christ alone was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." They sought, in a greater or less degree, only to establish systems which should exalt and perpetuate their own renown. Christ toiled and suffered for the glory of his Father, and the moral emancipation of a world. They lived and died like men. Christ lived and died like a God.

But not only is the Author of Christianity distinguished above the founders of all other religious systems by the unsullied perfection of his human character; he is also placed at an infinite remove from them by the divinity of his Person. Though dwelling in a mortal form, he was "God over all, blessed for ever." He was that Eternal Word, which "was in the beginning with God, and was God;" but which, to achieve the redemption of the lost, assumed our nature, and sojourned in this blighted abode of guilt and woe. In this frail tabernacle of dust, he exhibited the living embodiment of the Divine Essence, and possessed and wielded all the attributes of Jehovah. He moved amidst the scenes and habitations of earth, the incarnate Deity—"God manifest in the flesh!"

In what a new and wondrous light does this fact present the qualities which he displayed, and the deeds which he performed! "His love becomes the love of a God, to be measured only by the stoop of his condescension from a throne to a cross—from the heights of bliss to the depths of agony—from the adoration of angels to the scoffs of mortals." His teachings are the teachings of Omniscience. His miracles are the product of illimitable power.

His death is the seal of an infinite Sacrifice. His resurrection is the putting forth of his own energy—the rising of Him who "hath life in himself," and who "quickeneth whomsoever he will." And his ascension is the triumphal return of an almighty conqueror to the empire of the heavens, there to dispense the blessings which he has purchased, and to prepare everlasting mansions for all his followers.

With what a transcendent glory is the Gospel thus invested! He, who created the spheres, and built the worlds, and whose omnipotent agency upholds and governs the realms of matter and of mind, established also the dispensation of Grace, and wrought out all its amazing benefits. And shall I be ashamed of a religion which has the Lord of the universe for its Author? What though I see him clothed in humanity, and descending to the lowest humiliation? It is Divinity, veiling its overpowering glories, and stooping from its dazzling seat, to the deep abyss in which an apostate race were sunk, to raise them to holiness and Heaven. What though I behold him expiring amid the ignominy and the horrors of crucifixion? It is the Godhead, working out the ransom of mankind, by satisfying the claims of Justice, vindicating the dishonored Law, and making a Propitiation for iniquity, which should become the central object in the achievements of Jehovah, and attract for ever the wondering regards of his intelligent creation. How does this feature of the Gospel throw far back into deepest shade all the schemes which men have invented for the amelioration of their state! These bear no impress of God—no stamp of celestial authority, on which conscience can rest, and hope repose. But Christianity is accredited by the very signature of the Most High. It beams with the effulgence of Heavenly Truth. It stands before us, the only Remedy of the ruined, the only Refuge for the guilty; towering upward above all human systems in the majesty of its Divine Founder; inviting the millions of the perishing to seek safety beneath its ample protection; breathing peace in its promises; and commanding devout awe and reverent obedience by the sanctions of an unveiled eternity. Of such a Gospel, emanating from such a source, never, O never let the believer be ashamed.

II. The believer has no cause to be ashamed of *the testimony on which the truth of the Gospel rests.* The evidences of our holy religion are so full and so conclusive, that no candid mind can resist their force. Even a cursory view of them will show that they amount to the most perfect moral demonstration. Look, for instance, at the long train of circumstances which prepared the way for this grand manifestation of Divine mercy;—the separation of the chosen seed, their settlement in the land of Canaan, and their continuance as a distinct people through all the vicissitudes

of their eventful history, that they might preserve the knowledge of the true God, and furnish a lineage for their future Messiah. Reflect upon the numerous and striking prophecies by which his coming was foretold—prophecies, commencing with the promise given to our first parents, and extending, along the succession of ages, with ever increasing clearness and fullness, down to the close of the Old Testament Record—prophecies, so ample in their scope, and so minute in their details, that had we not the most undeniable proof of their having been written centuries before the occurrence of the facts to which they relate, we might well regard them as history rather than prediction. These prophecies describe, not only the character, offices, and works of Christ, but also the peculiar manner of his dissolution and of his burial, and even fix, with an accuracy which none can mistake, the *time* when He should "make an end of sin" by his atoning sacrifice. And with what literal exactness were they all fulfilled in the life and death of our Lord! Contemplate, too, the imposing array of types and symbols, of sacrificial rites, and emblematic observances, by which, for so long a period, his incarnation and sufferings were foreshadowed, and the expectation of him kept alive in the minds of men. Not only was his advent the great theme on which the seers of old poured forth their most sublime and enrapturing strains, but the anticipation of it pervaded all the institutions and ceremonies of the Jewish economy, and formed to the devout and pious, the absorbing object of desire, shining out, on the vision of Faith, the lone star of Hope in their darkened firmament. And when the Redeemer, at length, appeared, what manifold and abundant confirmation was given to the divine authority of his mission! Angels announced his birth, and proclaimed him as that exalted Mediator, whose visit to our world should bring a boundless revenue of glory to God, and diffuse peace and holiness on earth. At his baptism, the Father, with an audible voice, declared him to be his "beloved son, in whom he was well pleased," and placed on his brow the bright signet of divinity, by causing the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, to descend from Heaven, and rest upon him. After Christ had commenced his public ministry, how numberless and convincing were the miracles which he wrought, to demonstrate the truth of his claims. At his command, diseases fled—the deaf heard—the blind saw—the lame walked—lepers were cleansed—devils departed from the bodies of the possessed—the dead rose up from their graves—the chainless winds were hushed, and the angry waves grew calm. Heaven, earth, and hell, were alike subject to his control. Now, when we consider that these miracles were performed, not in privacy and solitude, but often in the presence of his most envenomed foes, and always in such situations as to preclude all possibility of collusion or imposture, we cannot but

view them as the product of Almighty power—the palpable attestation of Jehovah to the Messiahship of Jesus.

Not less decisive is the evidence arising from the nature of the doctrines which the Savior taught. He made known the only method by which apostate man can be restored to the favor of a righteous God, and introduced a system of pure and heavenly morality, of which the wisest philosophers had never dreamed, and to which all subsequent researches have added nothing. And having offered up his life on the cross, to expiate human guilt, he gave the crowning seal to his celestial commission, by rising from the dead, appearing alive to his disciples, and then ascending, before their eyes, to the sphere of his original glory. Nor, after his departure, was his Gospel left without witness. The Holy Spirit was sent down to supply his place, and confirm the preaching of the apostles, by "signs, and wonders, and divers miracles," and an inexhaustible affluence of supernatural gifts. And thus corroborated and energized, with what matchless efficacy did the message of salvation fall from their lips! Sustained by this heavenly agency, how rapid and triumphant was their course from city to city, and from province to province! Before their resistless onset, the gods of the heathen fell, the gloom of superstition vanished, the oracle and the shrine were abandoned, and the vast empire of idolatry crumbled into dust. Their voice reached alike the lonely desert, and the crowded walks of men—the peasant in his hut, the craftsman at his toil, the philosopher in his study, and the king on his throne. The bigoted Jew, the haughty Roman, the cultivated Greek, the rude Barbarian, trembled at their appeals, and bowed beneath the power of the doctrines which they published. Within the lapse of a single generation, they carried the victorious banner of the cross over every region of the then civilized earth. And, during all the ages that have since rolled away, the Gospel has lost nothing of its original and deathless vitality. Entombed, for centuries, in the deep grave of papal corruption, it has emerged from the festering mass, pure, elastic, unimpaired. Invulnerable as the sacred bush, burning but not consumed, it has survived every trial of its truth, and every assault of its enemies. Opposition and violence, in all possible forms, have been arrayed against it. The rage of infidelity, the wrath of Antichrist, and the sleepless malice of Hell, have done their utmost to overthrow and annihilate it. But, preserved by that omnipotent Spirit whose presence is ever with it, it is still fresh and vigorous, as when it first went forth, in its youthful might, to subdue the hearts of mankind; and fraught with indestructible life, and clad in celestial armor, it is now girding itself anew for the conquest of the world.

Have I, then, reason to be ashamed of a religion whose origin from the living God is demonstrated by such numerous and irrefragable proofs? Shall the infidel taunt me with giving credence to

unsupported dogmas, and building my everlasting hopes on a mere hypothesis? No; standing on the firm foundations of the Christian Faith, I can smile at his bootless scorn,—assured that the scheme of redeeming Grace to which I have trusted my soul, is based on eternal verity; and that, amid the fluctuations of all human theories, here alone is the immovable Rock, which the waves of time and the floods of hostility can never shake; and which shall remain, fast-sealed as Heaven's throne, when the pillars of the universe give way, and earth and skies are no more.

III. The believer has no cause to be ashamed of the *means by which the Gospel is promulgated.* Had Christianity been the invention of men, they would doubtless have sought to advance it by force of arms—by alliance with the civil power—or by the pomp and pageantry of a splendid ritual, suited to dazzle the eye, and enthral the senses. Such are the methods which human wisdom, in its blindness, has always adopted. And the fact, that the Divine Author of the Gospel has chosen an entirely different mode of procedure, has ever been regarded by the proud and great of this world, as fixing on his religion the charge of folly. But in this, they have only evinced their own ignorance and fatuity. It is characteristic of the omniscient and almighty One, to accomplish his benign purposes, by causes simple in their nature, silent in their operation, but most stupendous in their effects. In accordance with this law of his administration, he has "ordained to save, by the foolishness of preaching, them that believe;" and to promote and establish the interests of his Church, by the naked proclamation of "Christ crucified," connected with the prayers and efforts of his people, and rendered effectual by the promised influences of his Spirit. And these instrumentalities are eminently adapted to produce the results for which they were appointed. While the means which human short-sightedness would have employed, could only have subdued the bodies of men, or enlisted the brute homage of their passions; those which God has devised enlighten the understanding, convince the judgment, awaken the conscience, rouse the deep sensibilities of the soul, lead captive all its affections, and bring the whole outward and inward man into subjection to the sceptre of grace.

How full of moral sublimity is the process by which the Gospel thus makes its way through the earth! Compare with it the manner in which Mohammedanism and Popery have endeavored to disseminate their respective creeds. The former was extended by the sword. "The Koran or the scimetar," was the motto which it bore aloft on its blood-red flag; and ruined cities, depopulated countries, and the wail of slaughtered millions, marked its course of desolation and havoc. The latter has gained its conquests by political intrigue, and unholy union with the state; by ministering

to the vices and ambition of kings; by decking its harlot form in the gorgeous drapery of imposing ceremonies; by fraud, imposture, and "lying wonders;" and by the terrible array of its anathemas, inquisitorial tortures, dungeons, and flames. Wherever its cause has triumphed, its trophies have been the damnation of its deluded and besotted votaries, the tears and groans of persecuted piety, and the bleaching bones of God's murdered saints. In what wide contrast to all this do the movements of genuine Christianity appear! Whether we contemplate it as it was carried forward by the apostles in primitive times, or as it is now propagated in its purity, how grand, how godlike, is its calm yet resistless march! With no dependence on princes and potentates, no connexion with secular authority, no resort to meretricious arts, or wordly wisdom, but relying on the simple preaching of the cross, and the blessing of Heaven, it advances along its victorious path, majestic, peaceful, bloodless; erecting its throne in human hearts; gathering its laurels from the sorrows it relieves, and the souls it regenerates; and diffusing, like some broad and tranquil river, wherever it comes, life, holiness, and joy. Nowhere, in the working of mere earthly systems, can agencies be found so truly sublime; and however they may be undervalued or despised by the sceptical and irreligious, the Christian will glory in them, as fitted to the ends for which they were designed, elevated in their character, and crowned with the richest tokens of the divine approval.

IV. The believer has no cause to be ashamed *of the adaptation of the Gospel to the wants of mankind.* All the plans ever brought forward by philosophers and moralists, to reform the corruptions, and alleviate the miseries of humanity, have been wholly unsuited to the circumstances of the race for whose benefit they were intended. They have regarded man as fallen indeed, yet as possessing in himself all the resources requisite for his own recovery, and as needing nothing but the correction of his external conduct; while the incentives to virtue, with which they have sought to supply him, have been derived from present expediency, and the interest of this fugitive life. Well may the *authors* and adherents of such systems blush at their impotence and vanity. The doctrines which they teach, and the rules of action which they prescribe, are as powerless against the force of human depravity, as the arm of an infant is to chain the whirlwind, or stay the rushing avalanche.

But the religion of Christ is open to no such objection. It is precisely fitted to the nature and condition of man, and meets all the tremendous exigencies in which he is involved. It contemplates him as a sinner, helpless and perishing; condemned by the sentence of a righteous law to eternal punishment; unable to make any satisfaction to offended Justice; and destitute alike of the

ngth and the will to return to God, and render him an acceptable dience. But, for this state of utter ruin, it reveals an all-suffi- nt remedy. It sets forth the perfect merits of the Lord Jesus, o by his atoning death, and glorified ascension, has honored broken covenant, answered the claims of infinite Majesty, and ned the gate of Heaven to the penitent and believing. It pre- ts the Holy Spirit, the blessed Agent of conversion, as ready, his almighty influence, to illumine the benighted soul, restore perverted energies, eradicate its loathsome corruptions, and mp it afresh with the lost image of its Maker. And it draws, m the boundless compassion of the Son of God, from the dread- guilt of rejecting his mercy, from the solemn scenes of the gment, and the glories and terrors of eternity, motives of over- elming weight, calculated to call forth every slumbering faculty the great concern of obtaining the favor of the Most High, of fecting holiness in his fear, and insuring a title to the inherit- e of the skies.

Thus is the relief afforded by the Gospel commensurate with all necessities of undone men. Whenever its provisions are fully braced, iniquity is pardoned and washed away; the sinner is ewed in righteousness, reconciled to God, and accepted and ified before him; the prodigal is brought back to his Father's se; the wanderer from Heaven—the exile from hope and hap- ess—is reclaimed, and invested anew with all his forfeited privi- s; the rebel against the divine government is changed into a ing and faithful subject; and the lawless disturber of society, profligate reveller in crime, is cleansed and sanctified, and fur- ed with high and commanding principles of conduct, which l him to restrain his unhallowed propensities, and live from day lay in view of the momentous realities of the world to come. w evident, then, is it, that a religion so amply qualified to reach he evils which afflict the apostate children of earth, is worthy he utmost esteem and confidence!

r. The believer has no reason to be ashamed of the Gospel, ause, in the salvation which it offers, *the power of God is spe- ly manifested.* The omnipotence of Jehovah shows itself in the operations of his hand. The creation of the material uni- se, and the ceaseless providence by which it is upheld and cted, declare to the most thoughtless observer his uncontrollale rgy. But in none of his works is this attribute so strikingly ibited, as in that spiritual renovation by which he transforms raved and alienated hearts into his own likeness, and prepares n for the bliss of his kingdom. To this the apostle refers, m he adduces, as a principal ground of his glorying in the Gos- the fact, that "it is the power of God unto salvation;" or, in er words, that God signally puts forth his power in rendering it

savingly efficacious. Without this exertion of Divine might, the Gospel, notwithstanding all its priceless stores of mercy, could never be instrumental in regenerating and sanctifying a single soul. So obstinate is the impenitence of men, so wedded are they to their evil courses, that, if left to their own choice, they would for ever reject all the invitations of redeeming Love. Whenever they do renounce their opposition, and submit to the Savior, it is because they are "made willing in the day of God's power." And how marvellous is that display of his power by which such a result is produced! Reflect upon the previous character of those whom he thus brings back to their allegiance, and inspires with a cordial affection for his authority and laws. In common with all the descendants of our fallen progenitor, they are, by nature, in a state of open rebellion against the supreme and rightful King; estranged from the Father of their spirits; living in utter forgetfulness, or bold defiance of him; disregarding his commands; abusing his bounties; spurning the calls of his compassion; and pressing on in the way of sin, heedless alike of his expostulations and his threatenings. But, in the midst of this infatuated career, God arrests them by an act of his sovereign, irresistible grace. Having given them to his Son as the reward of his sufferings, and chosen them in him before the world began—at his own appointed time he visits them from on high; pours the light of his truth into their darkened minds; shows them their fearful criminality and danger; creates them anew in Christ Jesus; produces within them repentance and faith; blots out their manifold transgressions; sheds abroad his love in their hearts; and adopts them into his holy and blessed family. And after he has thus united them to himself, he sustains and guides them in all their future pilgrimage; keeps alive the flame of their piety; purifies them more and more; shields them in the hour of temptation; succors them under every trial; bestows on them unspeakable comforts; conveys their souls, at death, to the mansions of Paradise; and will finally raise their bodies from the dust of the sepulchre, and install their whole ransomed and glorified being in the ever enduring beatitudes of Heaven. Where can we find a manifestation of almightiness so astonishing as this? If one of those luminous globes which God has hung in the skies to cheer and bless us, were to wander from its course, and rush in wild disorder through the fields of space, spreading confusion and ruin among its sister orbs; how should we admire the power that restored it to its appointed path, and caused it to revolve again in beauty and harmony. But far more wonderful is the exhibition of divine power, when a soul, "dead in trespasses and sins," is quickened into spiritual life, inasmuch as the work is in itself more difficult, and the benefits arising from it indescribably greater. In forming and preserving the worlds, the subject on which God acts is mere matter, passive and uncon-

scious, with neither ability nor inclination to oppose his will. But in the conversion aud salvation of men, he has to deal with mind, rational, intelligent mind, endowed with volition and responsibility, and that must be impelled by moral, not physical, force;—with mind, imperishable and deathless; possessing vast and ever growing capacities of happiness and misery; and which shall live on for ever in measureless joy, or infinite despair, when suns and planets have vanished from their spheres, and are quenched in everlasting darkness.

How glorious and encouraging is this feature of the Gospel! "It is the power of God unto salvation." Omnipotence is pledged to its success. This is the cardinal truth which gives it its highest value, and its certain efficacy. This is the strong anchor which prevents the whole of our revolted race from going headlong to perdition. This is the infallible provision which secures the ultimate recovery of all who are included in the Covenant of Grace.

VI. The believer has no reason to be ashamed of the Gospel, *because it eminently illustrates the holiness of God.* That it does so, is plainly taught by the apostle, when he affirms that "therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith;"—that is, through the exercise of faith, it makes known, to the apprehension of faith, God's method of justification by the imputed merits of Christ; which, while it pardons and saves the believing sinner, demonstrates the rectitude of Jehovah, and sacredly guards his inviolable honor. However desirous the Almighty might be to manifest his clemency to mankind, he could not do it in any manner that should compromise his other perfections, or lead the subjects of his moral government to question the purity of its administration. The safety and happiness of the rational empire over which he presides, require him to preserve, at all hazards, the sanctity of his law, and maintain the rights of his infinite sovereignty. And in devising a plan for the salvation of sinners, the great question to be settled—a question which the loftiest archangel could never have answered—was, how God could extend forgiveness to those who had rebelled against him, without appearing to countenance rebellion, to detract from its enormity, and thus afford license to its commission. In the scheme of the Gospel, divine Wisdom has solved this tremendous problem. By giving up to death his only begotten Son, as our Substitute and Surety, Jehovah has made, to the whole intelligent universe, a most convincing and impressive demonstration of his abhorrence of sin, and of his unchangeable purpose to uphold the sacredness of his authority. All his perfections are reconciled and harmonized in the sacrifice of Christ. On Calvary's awful brow, beneath the gloom of the shrouded heavens, and amid the throes of the trembling earth,

truth and mercy met and mingled, righteousness and peace embraced each other. And now when the contrite offender, casting himself on the atonement of Jesus, is pardoned and received into favor, every attribute of God consents to the deed of amnesty. His holiness is displayed and vindicated; his law is magnified and made honorable; and the stream of his love can flow forth to all who repent and believe, without impinging against any of the abutments of his justice, or shaking a single pillar of his throne. Who can estimate the worth of that religion which, in the very acquittal of the guilty, exhibits, in the most prominent and affecting light, the inflexible righteousness of Heaven's King, and spreads a salutary awe through every rank of accountable beings?

VII. The believer has no cause to be ashamed of *the effects which the Gospel has already produced.* If we consider merely the influence which it has exerted on the well-being of man in the present life, we shall perceive abundant reason for rejoicing in it. "It is true, that ignorance, error, fanaticism, persecution, and bad morals—the product of a corrupted Gospel—have often been charged upon Christianity itself." But this is like ascribing the blights, that the harvest sometimes receives from the clouds and storms of a turbid atmosphere, to the sun which, though obscured, still shines serene and pure in the upper sky. The perversions of the Gospel, emanating from human depravity, are no evidence against its own inherent usefulness. "We know, also, that the enemies of our holy religion once loved to contrast the fancied virtues of pagan lands with the vices of those which are nominally Christian. But the more accurate knowledge which has lately been acquired, of the state of unevangelized nations both in ancient and modern times, has silenced this malignant argument, and proved that Christianity, even in its worst forms, is altogether superior in its moral tendencies, to the best systems of Heathenism which the world has ever seen. When, however, we speak of Christianity as acting beneficially on the temporal condition of men, we intend no reference to those vile apostasies which have usurped its venerable name. What have we to do with the idolatries of the Papal, or the superstitions of the Greek, Church? Our Bible spurns them; and in proof of this, they have spurned the Bible, well knowing that its testimony must be stifled, ere they can pass off their cheats and impostures under its authoritative sanction. Of the Gospel of 'the man of sin' we might be ashamed; of the Gospel of the Son of God, never. No; wherever this has come—whether breaking through the gloom of partially enlightened Christendom, or dawning as the first beam of day on the long night of pagan darkness—the effect has been everywhere the same; from the parched and blasted soil, barren of all good, and fertile only in weeds and poisons, have sprung up the fruits of

righteousness, benevolence, and peace." To its influence we owe, directly or indirectly, all the improvement which, for eighteen hundred years, has taken place in the circumstances of society. It has promoted civilization; having rescued a large portion of mankind from the barbarism in which they were once sunk, and where they were given up to debasing vices, the prey of unbridled passions, moving on, in wretchedness here, to a more wretched hereafter. It has modified the systems of human government, rendering them more favorable to the rights and liberties of the subject, and more accordant with its own merciful character. It has mitigated the cruelties and horrors of war, and is fast driving the fell scourge itself from the face of the earth. It has abolished slavery in many countries, and has pronounced its extermination in all. It has given activity and scope to the human mind, enlarged the boundaries of knowledge, widened the range of invention and discovery, and contributed greatly to the advancement of science and the useful arts. It has operated benignly on the domestic and social relations, teaching men their duties to themselves and to each other, diffusing a spirit of fraternal love, restraining selfishness, and inculcating submission to law and order. It has multiplied far and wide institutions of kindness and charity for the removal of want and the alleviation of distress. It has comforted millions under the pressure of sorrow; dried the tears of the mourner; lightened the burdens of the oppressed, and soothed, with its unspeakable consolations, the anguish of the dying. Thus has it refined, elevated, and blessed the children of men, in their pilgrimage below.

These, however, are only its incidental effects. They are but the indirect, though precious, fruits which it scatters along its path on its march to immortality. The main benefits which it has conferred, are to be found in the countless thousands whom it has delivered from the condemnation of sin, purified from all their corruptions, and translated to the bright abodes of never-ending felicity. When we think of the shining myriads which it has already gathered around the throne of God and the Lamb—of the abyss of ruin from which they have been saved—of the ineffable glory to which they are exalted—of the eternal career of wisdom, holiness, and seraphic joy which lies before them, in what high estimation should we hold that Gospel through whose instrumentality all this has been accomplished! Viewing it, then, in this two-fold aspect—contemplating, on the one hand, the blessings with which it has strewed this world, and, on the other, the millions of sanctified spirits with which it has colonized Heaven—how emphatically may we each respond to the apostle, and say, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ!"

VIII. Lastly, there is no reason to be ashamed of the Gospel,

when we look forward to its final results. All that has yet been effected by it is but preparatory to its future achievements—the beginning of its ultimate and universal triumphs. Inspiration has expressly assured us, that it shall continue to extend its operations, and to multiply its victories, until it has filled the whole earth with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. In the providence of God, every obstacle to its onward course shall disappear. The supineness and indifference of its professors—the human additions which weaken and disfigure it—the empty formalism, the wide-spread errors, the ecclesiastical hierarchies, which arrogate its name, while they are traitors to its cause—together with every form of secular opposition—shall all be removed. Bright and uncontaminated, as it first sprang into life from the lips of its Divine Originator, it shall go forth among all the kindreds of men, over every sea, and island, and continent,—bearing with it all its boundless treasures of mercy—annihilating all idolatry and false religion—overthrowing every species of oppression and tyranny —conforming all opinions, customs, and institutions to its own heavenly standard—subduing all hearts to its gentle sway—and converting this long polluted and sin-burdened globe into a mighty censer, which, as it rolls round in the hands of the great High Priest, shall send up to him, from all its regenerated children, the pure offering of love and the sweet incense of praise. Then shall it have done its "perfect work." Then shall dawn the Jubilee of the creation. Then shall the differing tribes of mankind, cemented by the golden bond of Christianity, become one family; and over the vast sisterhood of nations, dove-like Peace shall wave her sunny wings. Then shall the last vestige of the curse be effaced. And then shall be heard, loud and joyous, as the hymn of angels at the birth of our world, the anthem of that world recovered, "Now is come salvation and the kingdom of our God;" while Heaven, catching the rapturous strain, shall respond to earth, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

When that glorious day shall arrive; when this revolted province of Jehovah's empire shall have been reclaimed to its allegiance, and restored to its primeval beauty; when all its ransomed inhabitants shall spend their existence here in holy conformity to the Divine will, and then pass to their home above, peopling the realms of immortality with a multitude which no man can number —how overwhelming will be the proofs of the value and efficacy of the Gospel! And when, at last, this terrestrial economy shall close, and all the scenes of this momentous drama be wound up—should it be our blessed lot to be found among the glorified ones who shall be saved from its burning wreck—O, with what unutterable delight, standing on the plains of bliss, and reviewing all that the Gospel hath wrought, shall we exclaim, in concert with the long line of confessors and martyrs who sealed their testimony

to it with their blood, "We are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ!"

The subject will now be concluded with a few brief reflections, naturally arising from it.

1. *What supreme honor and affectionate homage are due to the Son of God.* To his atonement and intercession we are indebted for all the unsearchable riches of the Gospel, and for all its amazing benefits, past, present, and to come. Never, then, should we withhold from him the tribute of grateful love, and of reverent worship. Let us, my brethren, enthrone him in our inmost souls; consecrate to him the service of all our faculties; and ever regard him as the great Fountain of our spiritual life, the chief Object of our desire on earth, and the central Attraction in the glories of Heaven.

2. *The Gospel demands from us the most cordial acceptance, and the most decided avowal.* If it be of such incalculable worth, involving our dearest interest in time and in eternity, how thankfully should we embrace it, and yield ourselves to its control. With what unblenching firmness should we profess it before men, declaring our attachment to it in the presence of opposers and gainsayers, exemplifying its principles in our conduct, and "holding forth the word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation." And with what earnest zeal and untiring self-sacrifice should we labor to bring the impenitent around us to a saving reception of its truths; and to extend the knowledge of it among all the families of our ruined race, as the only antidote to the ills which they suffer, and the only lamp that can direct their steps through the darkness of this world, to the splendors of eternal day.

3. *How great is the guilt and folly of those who are "ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."* All are chargeable with being ashamed of it, who refuse to accept its grace, and to bow to its requirements. On each of you, then, my unconverted hearers, this dreadful imputation lies. And, O, what tongue can describe—what mind can adequately conceive—the extent of your criminality and madness! You are ashamed of "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God"—of that Gospel which his adorable Son died to procure—of that Gospel which is the sovereign balm for all the miseries of sin—of that Gospel which has already achieved so much for an outcast world, as to fill Heaven with rapture—of that Gospel which is the only defence of your own souls against the righteous anger of the Almighty. Be assured, that if you persevere in neglecting and setting it at naught, all the shame with which you now treat it, will, in the end, recoil upon yourselves. God will be ashamed of you, and will banish you for ever, with loathing and abhorrence, from the bliss of his presence. Christ will be ashamed of you, when he cometh in the glory of his Father. The angels will be ashamed

of you, for slighting a salvation whose mysteries form the subject of their deepest study, and of their loftiest wonder. The spirits of the just made perfect will be ashamed of you, because you have scorned the all-sufficient remedy which has brought them to the seats of blessedness. Devils will be ashamed of you, as having surpassed even their depravity, in that you have despised mercy never offered to them. And you will be ashamed of yourselves —ashamed of your desperate and suicidal conduct; and under the awful condemnation of God, the universal reprobation of his creatures, and the intolerable reproach of your own consciences, you will sink down, amid the torments of the fiery gulph, into unmitigated "shame, and everlasting contempt."

SERMON CCCCXLIX.

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MAN'S JUDGMENT AND GOD'S JUDGMENT.

For, if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things.—1 JOHN III., 20.

THERE are two constituted tribunals which take cognizance of men's actions, and authoritatively determine their character and destiny. These tribunals differ in their nature, order, and extent of power, and also as to the character and qualification of the judges who preside over them. The human *heart*, or conscience, is one of these tribunals, where reason sits as judge, and calls to an account for every passing deed, and gives sentence in this life. The tribunal of God is the other, where the enthroned Redeemer will hereafter sit in public judgment upon the conduct, and pronounce the eternal destiny of every creature. In the court of Conscience we are called to appear to-day, my hearers, to answer to charges involving all the interests of our deathless existence. Soon we shall stand at the higher and final tribunal, where, whatever may be the present decision in our case, unforgiven guilt will not go unpunished, and eternal truth and justice will be fully vindicated.

The first point to be settled by us respects the *character and*

qualifications of these respective judges. Everything depends, you perceive, upon this. If they are inflexibly just, we can only plead guilty and cast ourselves, as penitents, on God's mercy. If the human judge is imperfect and prone to err on the side of evil, it follows that we may escape the condemnation of our own heart, and yet find no favor hereafter. But if our own heart, with all its weakness and bias, *condemn* us, as guilty and unfit for Heaven, the expectation of acquittal in the last great day is vain and presumptuous.

I. What, then, is the character of Conscience as our moral judge in this life? It is not, in all respects, good. He is, at best, a weak, fallible, and imperfect judge, and therefore liable and likely to err in his decisions. So that it is unwise and unsafe to trust to his verdict only so far as it obviously accords with the great standard of appeal, the Word of God.

1. Conscience, in man, is a *depraved* judge. Man's moral as well as his intellectual and physical being, has come under the influence of sin. His moral sense is both impaired and vitiated by the state of his affections. The conscience is either so weakened in itself, or is subject to such strong depraved influences from without, that it is easily made to connive at sin and sanction the worst wrong. How often is the light in man darkness! Under the great law of depravity, how often does good become evil and evil good, right wrong and wrong right. The eternal line of distinction, drawn by the hand of God, between virtue and vice, becomes, in the habitual sinner, almost effaced, so that he is but poorly qualified to apprehend and realize the Truth. Hence his false views of the character of God—the nature and claims of his Law and Gospel—his own sinfulness and duty; in a word, of the whole matter of difference between him and his God. His conscience is so *perverted* from the right way, that he lives insensible to the enormity of his guilt; excuses his evil conduct, and labors to justify that in himself and others, which is palpably wrong. The verdict of Conscience, then, cannot be wholly confided in. You would not trust your life in the hands of a murderer, nor your property with a robber, nor your reputation to the judgment of a notorious slanderer. And for the reason, that their sense of right and wrong in the case is perverted, and so perverted as to make them unsafe judges. As well call on a *blind* man to see or a *deaf* man to hear. Accordingly, certain occupations are thought, by the common assent of mankind, to have such a perverting influence on the moral feelings, as to be an absolute disqualification in those who follow them, to sit in a judicial capacity even under oath. And now when the sinner's whole being is depraved, and his life one tissue of wrong and wickedness, is it likely that he will be a fair and strict judge in the case of his own soul against

God? And yet if condemned by a judge so depraved as Conscience, how shall you stand before God?

2. Conscience is a strangely *ignorant* judge. There is one great standard by which all beings and actions are to be tried. God has *revealed* the law to which we are subject, declared the principles by which we are to regulate our conduct, and on which the final judgment will proceed. And to know whether our conduct is good or evil, whether we merit the favor or incur the displeasure of God, we must know what the standard of right is, and test our hearts and lives by it. Now the sinner is marvellously *ignorant* of the law by which he is to live and finally be judged. He neither understands its principles nor feels its obligations. It does not stand out before his mind in the lustre of its perfection and in its wide and solemn relations. He does not "apprehend it, spiritually," nor see how broad and strict are its requirements. He fails, therefore, to see his conduct in its true light—fails to make a right application of the divine Law to his faith and practice. Hence so few unrenewed sinners condemn themselves as verily guilty and unfit for heaven. They judge by another standard than the law of God, admit their own inclinations, or the common opinions and practices of men, as the law in the case, and judge themselves accordingly.

3. Conscience is a *partial* judge. In similar cases he gives different and even opposite verdicts. He condemns the very thing in others which he freely allows in himself. The members of the church are often judged by the sinner with a severe and unjust judgment, while he lives insensible to his own aggravated guilt; avoids a verdict in his own case; and even makes a parade and boast of his goodness. It is not strange, therefore, that many who go clear at the bar of Conscience are condemned of God.

4. Conscience is a corrupt, *interested* judge. The relations of life, worldly interest, fashion, custom, prejudice and the like, act as *bribes* to bias his judgment and foredetermine his verdict. You wish to please your own heart and gratify its desires, and hence naturally look with an evil eye on whatever crosses your inclinations, or opposes your conceived interests. The sinner is not *willing* to know the Truth. He will not see things which relate to his conduct and duty as *others* see them. He wishes to come to no decision that shall alarm his fears and constrain him to break off his sins and become a new creature.

Finally, Conscience is often an *unjust* judge. Enlightened but in part, under the law of depravity, and subject to manifold evil influences, he decides frequently against all reason and Scripture: against the clearest dictates of a sound philosophy: against the Law of God, the peace and welfare of his own soul, and the rights and interests of his fellow-men. No, the ungodly man is not *willing* to criminate himself, and therefore reasons falsely, shuts

his eyes to the truth, resists conviction, and wrests the Scriptures to his eternal undoing.

Such is the *character* of that judge who is to decide on your case, as a sinner to-day. And if you cannot establish your innocence and escape condemnation before one so disposed himself to evil, surely you will not think to stand in the great day of righteous reckoning! Come, then, and let us enter upon this solemn work as in the presence of God, knowing that the whole case will go up to be reviewed and passed upon, by infallible wisdom and omniscient justice.

And what *is* the verdict of your conscience, to-day, hearer? Does it not condemn you before God and men? Does it not pronounce you a SINNER, guilty, unholy, and utterly unfit for Heaven? Does it not charge home upon you most serious and weighty offences, offences against which lie the tremendous threatenings of God's Word?

Do you not, in truth, hate the character of God, which holds all impurity in utter abhorrence, and the all-perfect Law of God, which forbids all sin in thought, word, and deed, and enjoins a universal spiritual obedience? Have you not rejected the Lord Jesus Christ and refused to be reconciled to God by him? Have you not grieved the Spirit of God and hardened your heart under his strivings? Have you not disobeyed the Truth, times innumerable, striven to shut out from your mind its convicting light, and silenced its voice of honest reproof. Have you not trifled with holy things, by speaking lightly of sin and religion, God and Christ, heaven and hell? Have you not strangely undervalued and neglected your Bible; preferred any other book to it, and set at naught its divine instructions? Has it not gone unread for weeks, it may be, months, the neglected yet constant witness of your conduct, gathering up its testimony for the final judgment? Have you not said many things to wound the feelings and injure the reputation of others? The mercies of God to you have been great and numberless. And have you not abused them? Have you not failed to make suitable returns? Have you not turned them against God and made them occasions of sin? Have you not wasted many precious years of probation, years in mercy given to secure your salvation and do good in the world? Have you not lived without prayer? lived a guilty, needy, dependent creature, without any practical recognition of the being of God and your obligations to him? lived in the reception and enjoyment of numberless blessings, renewed every morning and fresh every evening, with no heart to bless or love the Father of mercies? Has not your example, in your family and elsewhere, been evil, and calculated to mislead and injure? Have you not trifled with your religious feelings, resisted and overcome your convictions? As you think on the *past*, do not times and seasons

come fresh to mind, when you had a clear sense of your undone condition, wept over your sins, and besought the Lord for mercy, and yet you return to your evil ways and plunge deeper into guilt? Have you not broken the most sacred promises which a creature can make—promises made to God and your own soul in times of danger, or in seasons of sickness or bereavement? Have you not, time and again, resolved to mend your ways and seek the salvation of your soul, and yet are found to-day in rebellion against God?

These are some of the sins brought against you, fellow-sinner. And *have* you not committed them, over and over again, a thousand times? Can you plead otherwise than *guilty* to them, separately and collectively? Does not the judge in your breast *condemn* your conduct in each particular as contrary to the known law of God, the Gospel of Christ, and your own true interests? Is it not so *clear* a case, that Conscience, with all its depravity and weakness and bias, can pass no other sentence than that of absolute and unqualified *condemnation?* Does not this human judge bring you in guilty and without excuse? *From the nature of the verdict given in by Conscience, from the absolute and fearful condemnation which it pronounces upon you in this life, we argue the impossibility of your standing in the judgment of the great day, the certainty and awfulness of your final overthrow.* Let us pass on to the Throne of Judgment, and learn the certain and dreadful end of transgression. *There*, where we shall all soon appear, the Law will take its course, testimony will have its due weight, truth and justice will triumph, and the wicked must fall, irrecoverably. This is rendered certain from the character and known will of the divine Judge. For,

1. He is all-*wise*. "He knoweth all things." With the law and the testimony in all their facts and bearings, and with your life and character, he is perfectly familiar. He knows the exact measure of light and mercy you have enjoyed—the extent of your privileges—the number and magnitude of your sins—the degree of your guilt, and the punishment which it deserves. You cannot *deceive* him, therefore, by false testimony or a show of goodness, nor carry your point by special pleadings. Everything is open and naked to his view, and he will search your heart, and read your thoughts, and unravel the whole intricate thread of life, and place every act and event of your being in the clearest light.

2. He is infinitely *just*. He knows what is right and will maintain it. Wrong in all its forms, by whatever name called, and however disguised, he is sure to detect and bring into judgment. No such allowance for temptation, weakness, and infirmity, will be made by him as we are now for ever pleading. The whole Truth will be brought out with convincing clearness. Every act of your life will be separated from all that is foreign to it and

put on its own intrinsic merit. And the whole matter will be summed up on the principles of strict justice, and a decision made that shall stop every mouth, and vindicate the injured character and insulted law of God in the eyes of the universe.

3. He is strictly *impartial.* No distinctions which men have set up, will be regarded by him. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the Jew and the Gentile, will stand on one common footing. The strict moralist, the exact formalist, and the painted hypocrite, will be classed with the unbeliever, the sinner, and the reprobate. All men will be regarded, in and of themselves, as guilty, and entitled to no favor. And the only ground of distinction that will there be acknowledged, is *moral character*—the only line of separation that shall be drawn by the final Judge, will be between the *righteous* and the *wicked*, the holy and the unholy. On the one side or the other of this great dividing line, will every soul of us and every creature of God, be found in the great day of final reckoning.

4. That Judge will not be *bribed.* No excuses which you can offer, no pleas that you may put in, no confession that you might render, will have the least weight with him. Tears, and prayers, and entreaties, will then move him not. The day of mercy will be over and gone for ever. The tender and lowly Jesus who now pleads with you, will then appear in all the dread attributes of a just Judge; he will know you only as a daring and unforgiven sinner, and treat you as such. Stern and inflexible, he will try your case, weigh you in his balance, and pronounce your doom.

5. He will decide your case according to *the Law and the Testimony.* By his own high standard, and not according to those which man's wisdom or folly has set up, will he judge your cause. According to the principles laid down in his holy Word, will he determine your guilt and mete out punishment. And "the book will be opened," containing a full and impartial history of your life and probation, a record of every thought, word, and deed. The book of Nature will be opened, bearing on every page the impress of God's perfections. The book of Providence will bring to light all God's kind and gracious dealings with you. The book of Grace will speak out all its wonders, and show what God has done and Jesus suffered, to save you. The book of Conscience will declare the numberless times you were checked in your evil course, and reproved for your sins; and the book of Memory will set the Past before your eyes in the vividness and freshness of life; and the great "book of God's remembrance" will illustrate and clearly establish your character. O, what overwhelming testimony will these books bring to light! And there will be no *denying* the Truth. It will stand out like the sun in the heavens, clear, bright, irresistible. And in strict accordance with the divine law and

this testimony, will that sentence be from which there is no appeal, and which will fix the sinner's eternal destiny.

Finally, the great Judge who is to pronounce upon your case, will see that *his sentence is duly executed.* Once condemned of God, and there's no escape. No creature can deliver you out of his hands. His awful word, "depart," will hide you in hell for ever. And he will never think of you again with kindness or pity. Not one relenting will ever be kindled in his heart towards you. But the fruit of your own guilty doings will be given you; and the weight of everlasting condemnation will press upon you.

Before this great and awful Judge, dear hearer, your case will be called up. It *must* go up for final adjudication at Eternity's tribunal. It will come on soon. And it cannot be laid by, or passed over, or ruled out; it must come up fairly, too, and be tried on its intrinsic merits. No evasions, no equivocations, no special pleadings, will be allowed; no technicalities of law will give you any advantage; no flaw in the testimony will open to you a door of escape, and nothing in the character of the Judge will favor impunity. On the simple ground that you were a sinner and repented and believed, or hardened your heart in rebellion and refused the proffers of mercy, the whole case will rest.

And now, fellow-sinner, I ask, in all seriousness and faithfulness, if you can stand with confidence and hope before so strict and righteous, so holy and severe a Judge? If you cannot clear yourself at the bar of your own weak and perverted *Conscience*, can you reasonably expect to do it at the tribunal of Omniscient Justice. If you cannot possibly escape the condemnation of your own evil *heart*, and of your fellow-sinners, how shall you escape the condemnation of the holy and just God? If your own judgment and memory produce so fearful an amount of criminating evidence against you, how shall you answer, where hide your head, when "the books" shall be opened in the presence of the assembled universe, and their testimony produced? And if the condemnation which *Conscience* brings you under now be so heavy and grievous, to what depths of woe, and remorse, and despair, will you sink under *that* condemnation which "God and the Lamb" shall inflict upon you, in the day of righteous judgment?

Fellow-sinners! you must be condemned finally. You cannot stand in the judgment. And condemned there by God himself, your case, and with it your soul and immortality, will be *lost*—and lost *eternally.*

1. *Self-condemnation is not saving repentance.* The two are often confounded. Many a one flatters himself that it shall be well with him at last, because he condemns himself, confesses his sins, and feels remorse and anxiety on account of them. This he thinks to be repentance, and makes it the ground of hope. But the fact that conscience condemns us, is no proof of true repentance. The disposition

of the heart in reference to sin must be changed, and there must be an actual forsaking of it, if we would be forgiven. The murderer may clearly apprehend his guilt, and feel the keenest remorse of conscience, and be sorry for the deed, as causing his punishment, and yet experience no change of heart in relation to the act as a great moral offence in the sight of God. So you may see and confess your sins a hundred times a day, and still remain an *im*penitent sinner. Self-condemnation will not justify you with God. You may go through life, blaming yourself, weeping over your sins, and trembling in view of the terrors of the Lord, and yet find no mercy but swift condemnation in the judgment. "Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee, thou wicked servant," will be the language of the Judge to such an one.

2. No man can infer his good estate, or final salvation, from the fact that his Conscience does not condemn him. For Conscience, as we have seen, is not an unerring judge. It is greatly impaired by reason of sin. It is often misled. It is liable to be grossly ignorant. Its judgment is warped or weakened by the state of the heart. It is, in a great measure, a creature of education, habit, custom. What Conscience condemns in one man, it spares in another. What it condemns in one land or age of the world, it allows in another. The very act which to-day it pronounces a crime, it may to-morrow sanction as a virtue. And will you trust your soul in the hands of such a judge? Will you set up Conscience as the standard of appeal in so important a matter? Is it not presumption to reckon on Heaven with certainty because Conscience approbates your conduct? No; God's Word is the only sure standard. While *that* condemns you, the approval of all creation is utterly vain and worthless.

3. *A man ought to deal honestly with his own Conscience.* God has constituted this tribunal in your soul, for wise and holy ends. Day by day it calls you to an account for your conduct, and either approves or condemns your actions. And though its decisions are not *always* right, yet when enlightened by God's Word and Spirit, it generally renders a true verdict. And is it wise or safe, then, to leave Conscience uninformed; to trifle with its dictates; or stifle its convictions? Is not every man called on, by all the interests which it guards, to give Conscience a fair hearing; to judge himself with honest judgment; and, if possible, so to live that his heart shall not condemn him?

4. We learn from this subject, the *worth of that blood* by which the Christian is justified at the bar of his own Conscience and accepted of God, though in himself guilty, and deserving of death. The Christian admits the truth in all its extent and aggravation; pleads guilty, and casts himself on the mercy of God. When Conscience, armed with the terrors of a violated law, lays hold of him, he turns to the Cross and pleads the blood of atonement, and

straightway its wrath is appeased—its thunder stayed. And in the final day, that blood will clear him and render the Judge his friend. And is that blood to be *despised?* Oh! is the blood of the Lamb of God, by which we have peace, which speaks our pardon and seals our redemption, is it a vain thing?

5. We infer from our subject, *the certain final overthrow of the hopes of multitudes.* Men *will* trust to their own judgment, and so are deceived. They will act a *false* part with Conscience, and so it slumbers over their guilt, or comes to sanction their wickedness, and their fears are lulled to sleep, and they cry, "Peace, peace," when God has not spoken peace to them. Yes, you may judge *wrong* judgment here, and stumble along through life, but God will set all things right at last. Every decision to which you may come, during your probation, he will review; every act scrutinize, and bring to bear on the great final question. And, O, what a judgment will that be! How many who passed man's judgment will not endure that day's fiery trial! How many hopes will it disappoint, and hearts make for ever sad!

Finally, *How full of anxiety and trembling ought every soul of us to be, in anticipation of the last great judgment?* There, you and I, my hearers, have each a cause pending—a cause involving our never-ending existence. And soon—O, how soon—we shall stand there and know the final and solemn decision. And are you READY for that awful hour? Are you *prepared* to answer for all your conduct at the bar of Jesus Christ? O, have you found forgiveness and acceptance of the most high God? Are you living with that day of days in full and constant view? You have a hope: is it one that death cannot blast—that the wreck of worlds shall not overthrow—that the great day of guilt's terror and doom will not disappoint? If not, while judgment lingers and damnation is restrained, up, and "flee from the wrath to come." For it is a fearful thing to go to the bar of an angry God—to meet his frown—to quail under his lightning glance, and be doomed by him to endless perdition.

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SERMON CCCCL.

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THE SABBATH AND FREE INSTITUTIONS.

If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own way, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.—Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

It is plain that the purity and perpetuity of the civil institutions of the Jews depended on their keeping the Sabbath. Nothing can be more explicit than the promises and threatenings of the Bible on this point. It is not in the text alone that the Sabbath is singled out, and that national blessings are made to depend solely upon the performance of its duties. The same thing is stated even more explicitly by the prophet Jeremiah. "And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter into the gates of this city, kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever." "But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."

So we find this subject was viewed by Nehemiah. He fearlessly and vigorously sustained the Sabbath in his capacity as magistrate, and expressly assigned as a reason, its connexion with the perpetuity of their civil institutions. "In those days," says he, "saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath." In the Chronicles we find it assigned as the object of the captivity, that the land might enjoy her Sabbaths, for it is said, that "as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath." In these passages the Sabbath stands alone; in others, we find it associated with the highest moral duties, and sustained by the same sanctions with them. Thus, either through the natural laws of God, or by his direct interposition, there was a peculiar connexion between the national prosperity of the Jews and the keeping of the Sabbath.

But the duties of the Sabbath grow out of no peculiar relation of the Jews to God; the promises and threatenings connected with it are such as we never find connected with any mere ritual or ceremonial observances, and as show conclusively that he who uttered them regarded the law of the Sabbath as of equal authority with the rest of the decalogue; and we believe that the history of God's providence, both with regard to individuals and to communities, will show that this law is still unrepealed. Well, then, may we consider, as we now propose to do, "The importance of the Sabbath to the purity and perpetuity of free institutions"—those under which we live, and in the success of which all the hopes of our country are placed.

And here the first point to be noticed is, that the perpetuity of free institutions must depend on their purity. It would not be honorable to the providential government of God, nor for the best interests of man, that corrupt institutions, under whatever form, should be permanent. Corruption, seeking to work out its own ends, must come into collision with every principle of the virtuous, and with every instinct of society for self-preservation; and such a state of things neither can, nor ought to be, quiet or permanent. There will be, and we say, let there be, overturnings and overturnings, till He shall come whose right it is to reign, and who will reign rightly. But free institutions, just in proportion as they are free, must furnish scope for this corruption to do its work, and this

can be prevented only by keeping them pure. The danger to such institutions NOW is not from without, but from corruption within, working in the name and under the forms of liberty—wearing her garb, and using her watchwords.

What, then, do we mean by the PURITY of free institutions? This must refer both to the spirit in which they are administered, and to the ends which they secure. The administration of free institutions in their true spirit, implies a right state of the moral nature; a choice of right ends and of the means of obtaining them implies an enlightened intellect; and hence "free institutions will be pure, only when all who vote, and all who hold office, shall be intellectually qualified to perform those functions well, and when they shall perform them from proper motives." Thus, and thus only, can these institutions be rightly administered, and their legitimate ends be secured. This is only another form of affirming the necessity of knowledge and virtue in the individuals composing a free community—the necessity, not certainly, as is often supposed, of all knowledge, but only of that knowledge of rights and of duties which is indispensable to virtue and subservient to it.

If this idea of the purity of free institutions be correct, we are thrown back, for every rational ground of confidence in their perpetuity, upon the elevation and purity of individual character. That this is the true foundation of institutions really free, the only condition on which they can be enjoyed, or be permanent, was clearly seen by our Fathers; and is in accordance with the plainest principles of common sense, and with the methods by which God accomplishes ends in his natural government. In estimating the duration of a house, does common sense regard chiefly its form, or the nature of the materials and the manner in which they are united? In holding this globe together, does God hoop about a vast mass of loose particles by an external force? or does he bestow gravitation upon every individual particle, and thus secure the permanence of the whole by the qualities of the individual parts? The attempt to effect any radical improvement in society, merely by different forms of association, is an attempt to make particles of sand adhere together by changing their position. Remaining as they are, they will not adhere, and it will avail nothing to put them in the form of a triangle or a square or an octagon. No, if mortar is to be made of sand it must be done by adding lime, and when every particle shall have thus acquired an adhesive property, a solid body may be formed that shall endure for ages. This condition, so clearly seen by our Fathers, we ought to see and cheerfully to accept. We ought to regard it as a high distinction of free institutions, that they become pure and perfect only as those for whom they are administered advance towards their true dignity and end, regarded as members of the higher economy of God's government.

From what has now been said, it will appear, that in consider-

ing the importance of the Sabbath to the perpetuity of free institutions, we have only to regard its effect upon their purity, that is, virtually and ultimately, upon individual character.

Nor, in considering this, is it to be supposed that the purity of free institutions will depend solely on any one thing. The life of man, simple as it seems in itself, does not depend upon warmth alone, or upon air, or food alone, but upon the combined agency of them all, and if any one of them should be removed, life would cease. So there may be, and we suppose there is, a circle of agencies, each of which is indispensable to the life of a free people, and it becomes a question for the philosopher and statesman, no less than for the divine, to ascertain what these are. Now, what we say is, that the Sabbath, suitably observed, comes within this circle. We would not exaggerate its influence; we would detract nothing from the value of other agencies—of family government—of popular education—of a purified literature. These, and other agencies, may come within this circle; but what we now assert, what we wish to establish in this discourse, as sustained both by reason and by revelation is, that the Sabbath, suitably observed, does come there.

This position I would now proceed to sustain; but it cannot be done understandingly unless, as everything will turn upon that, we still inquire, in a preliminary way, what we mean by a suitable observance of the Sabbath. That the first day of the week will continue to be distinguished in some way, cannot be doubted; but no one can suppose that this, of itself, would secure the proposed end. If we would receive practical benefit from the Sabbath, we must do by it as we do by anything else which we put to a practical test—we must use it for the end for which it was made. The day must not be set apart for idleness or vice, but must be a Sabbath, kept in the manner and for the purpose designated by God.

Respecting this purpose of the Sabbath, and the manner in which it ought to be kept, I know there are different opinions; and if its PURPOSE can be ascertained, the manner of keeping it must be also, since any manner would be suitable which would accomplish that purpose. If the Sabbath was given solely with reference to the physical well-being of man, then any mode of keeping it which would secure physical rest would be suitable. If it was given to man as needing amusement, or such cultivation of the social affections as is found in friendly visits, and in dinner parties, or as needing the relaxation there is in idling or sauntering abroad, or in reading novels and light literature—then any mode of observing it will be suitable which will secure these ends. But if the Sabbath was given to man as having a religious nature, and derives its chief significance and obligation, its beauty and its grandeur, from the relations it implies between man as an immortal and an accountable being, and that God who made him,

and redeemed him, and will judge him at the last—then will it be suitably observed only as it is observed religiously—in the contemplation of those relations, and in preparation for an immortal life.

But on this point can any one doubt, who looks at the moral state of man as related to a holy heaven, or at such passages of the Word of God as I have chosen for my text? In this passage we find not only national blessings promised in connexion with the Sabbath, but a specification, most beautiful and full, of that manner of observing it with which alone these blessings can be fully connected. Here man is plainly regarded wholly as a moral and a religious being. It is supposed that he has, and may properly have, pleasures and interests of other kinds; but these are to be held in abeyance, and the day is to be devoted to honoring God in those duties of which he is the immediate object, and to the enjoyments which flow from a contemplation of his holy and glorious character and of our relations to him. Men are not to do their own ways, or find their own pleasures, or speak their own words. The meaning of these expressions can hardly be mistaken, and I leave them without comment to be interpreted by the consciences of those who are disposed to a lax observance of the day. These parts of the text are negative and prohibitory, and present that aspect of the Sabbath in which the world generally view it. They regard it as a species of Lent, on which the meats of worldly enjoyment are to be abstained from only that they may be devoured the more greedily the rest of the week. Hence it seems to them a dull, tedious, unprofitable day. They are at a loss what to do with its hours, and exclaim with some of old, "When will the Sabbath be gone that we may set forth wheat!" But the same principle is applied here that lies at the foundation of all Christian self-denial, which is always the denial of an inferior part of our nature for the sake of that which is higher. Men are not commanded to withdraw themselves from their ordinary business, and pleasures, and courses of thought, that they may pass into a state of vacuity, or as a penance, but for the purpose of meeting the great and essential wants of man as a social and a religious being, and of rising into a region of higher and purer enjoyment. There are great positive duties to be performed and high pleasures to be enjoyed, and no Sabbath is ever truly kept except in the performance of these duties and in the enjoyment of these pleasures. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable, and shalt honor him, then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD."

These views do not seem to me to need the sanction of human authority, but perhaps it will commend them to some who hear me to find them adopted by a distinguished novelist and man of

the world. "If we believe," says Sir Walter Scott, "in the divine origin of the commandment, the Sabbath is instituted for the express purposes of religion. The time set apart is the "Sabbath of the Lord"—a day on which we are not to work our own works or think our own thoughts. The precept is positive and the purpose clear. For our eternal benefit a certain space of every week is appointed which, sacred from all other avocations save those imposed by necessity and mercy, is to be employed in religious duties. The Roman Catholic church, which lays so much force on observances merely ritual, may consistently suppose that the time claimed is more than sufficient for the occasion, and dismiss the peasants when mass is over to any game or gambol which fancy may dictate, leaving it with the priest to do, on behalf of the congregation, what further is necessary for the working out of their salvation. But this is not Protestant doctrine, though it may be imitated by Protestant churches."

Having thus shown that the perpetuity of free institutions depends on their purity, and stated what we mean by the suitable observance of the Sabbath, I now proceed to show, first, that such an observance of this day will infallibly secure the purity and consequent permanence of free institutions, and secondly that without the Sabbath these cannot be secured.

And that the Sabbath thus observed would secure the purity and consequent permance of free institutions appears, first, because it would presuppose a right state of mind towards God.

There is evidently a peculiarity in the law of the Sabbath as a test of simple obedience and of a temper generally right towards the divine government. For obedience to the other commandments reasons may be found in the obvious interest of society and of the individual; but this is so far from being the case with the Sabbath that of all the ten commandments this is the only one concerning which the question has been raised whether it was moral or positive. This is not because the connexion between the violation of this law and its results is less certain, but that it is less immediate and obvious. Its sanctions do not come directly as when one puts his hand into the fire, but they come according to another general method in God's natural government, remotely, as in the effects upon the social fabric of intemperance, or licentiousness, or revenge. Of these, individual instances may seem slight, and alarm on account of them may be mocked at, yet through them there will gradually steal in a moral malaria that will poison and blast everything noble. Thus it is more especially with the Sabbath. God has infallibly linked cause and effect here—he has plainly revealed that connexion, yet the chain itself which binds them together is often concealed, or revealed only to the eye of faith. Hence it is that Sabbath-breaking is what has been called a leading sin; it is the point at which men naturally

break away from God, and when that is fully done, nothing can restrain them from any crime, but the absence of temptation or the fear of detection. Under these circumstances, let an individual devote the Sabbath to religious duties, public and private, honoring God and delighting himself in him, and he will show that regard to the principle of duty, as such, which will make him a good citizen —a pillar of strength to free institutions. He who thus walks humbly with his God will do justly and love mercy.

I observe, secondly, that such a mode of keeping the Sabbath would insure the purity and consequent permanence of free institutions, from its effect upon the intellect of the community.

It ought not to be forgotten that Christ originated, in inseparable connection with the Sabbath, the first great and permanent system of popular instruction that the world had ever known. He was himself "a TEACHER come from God," and one part of his commission to his disciples was, that they should TEACH all nations. True, the object of Christ was higher than mere instruction—it was persuasion and moral renovation; but since the moral and religious nature are reached only through the intellect, this necessarily implies much thought and much knowledge on subjects that naturally stir the human soul to its lowest depths. The man who knows the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, and who seeks to apply practically the instructions of Christ, may be unable to read, he may know nothing of the classification of natural objects on the earth or in the heavens, but his intellect cannot be dormant or unimproved. He has a knowledge that is life eternal, and that will naturally draw other knowledge within its range. And this knowledge is to be made accessible to all classes of people. Constrained by the love of Christ, his ministers are to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. Nor in doing this are they to employ declamation, or rant, or fanaticism. They are, as Paul did, to REASON of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come; and it is impossible that a community should hear these topics treated earnestly and wisely from week to week, and not come up to that intellectual elevation which would fit them to be members of a free community. An INDIVIDUAL may, indeed, as was just intimated, have the knowledge of God and of salvation without general knowledge; but this could not be the case with a community. Wherever there is an enlightened ministry and the instructions of the Sabbath, there, as all experience shows, will be schools and the diffusion of general intelligence. The very familiarity with the Bible itself, its history, its doctrines, its precepts, its poetry, and its prophecies, implied in a suitable observance of the Sabbath, would preclude the possibility of an ignorant people. It is to be observed, too, that all knowledge is not, according to a popular fallacy, equally related to the well-being of free institutions. There is much knowledge, literary and scientific, that may be, and

has been, the instrument or the ornament of tyranny and vice. But the knowledge drawn from the Bible and the Sabbath is precisely that which is adapted to stimulate and direct the moral nature. It is that knowledge of duties and of rights which is essential to virtue, and which is needed in connexion with it as the foundation of free institutions. Hence, a people who keep the Sabbath as did our Puritan Faters, attending church and studying their Bibles, not only may be, but will be, a free people. No power on earth can enslave them.

But, thirdly, such an observance of the Sabbath would insure the purity of free institutions, by its elevating, and softening, and harmonizing effect upon the feelings of men.

In the present state of the earth, and of the moral nature of man, labor is necessary, and is for his good; but in itself it is an evil, and as stimulated by avarice, or as enforced by necessity or by power, it has been one great cause of the degradation of the race. Constantly enforced, it must deteriorate alike the body and the mind. But let now this burden be removed one day in seven, as recognising not merely the physical wants of man, but his spiritual capacities and his higher affinities, and who can estimate its elevating effect? It places him at once in new relations. Let him, if need be, go down and toil six days in the mine of wordly gain—it may be his duty, and God may be with him there—but on the seventh let him come up and breathe a purer air, and dwell in the sunshine of a brighter light. Let him see that he has interests higher than those of earth, and that God has given him time to attend to those interests which no man has a right to take from him, and he feels at once that he is recognised as a child of God and an heir of immortality. The very stillness of the Sabbath then becomes the voice of God, speaking to his heart of that sympathy which he feels for the transient and feeble races of time. He rests, after the example of God. He remembers that Redeemer who on this day rose from the dead, and that heaven to which he has ascended, of which the Sabbath is at once a type so beautiful, and for which it is a means of preparation so necessary. And now let this stillness be broken by the sound of the Sabbath-bell; and having put off the garments and the soil of labor, let him go up with that outward purity, and that seemliness of appearance which comport with the purity and order of divine worship, and let him unite with his family, and neighbors, and with the great congregation, in the services of God's house; and there is something in this outward decorum, in the reverent posture, in the voice of prayer, and in the notes of sacred praise, that is softening and humanizing, that must touch the feelings and modify the associations, and tend to remove what is coarse and unseemly in the general deportment. Hence, what is called the rabble is never composed of those who habitually attend a Protestant church, and where all should do this, there would be no rabble.

It is, however, with the harmonizing, still more than with the elevating and softening tendencies of the Sabbath that our argument has to do. When men come together as the children of a common parent, bound alike to the grave and to the judgment seat; when they enter into the presence of that God before whose eternity human life is but a point, before whose greatness all human distinctions are inappreciable, upon whose bounty all are equally dependent, and whose mercy as sinners all equally need—they must seem to themselves and to each other to stand upon the level of one common humanity, and there will be a powerful tendency to produce that feeling of brotherhood—of equality and affection—which lies at the foundation of our institutions. The rich and the poor meeting together under circumstances to make them feel that the Lord is the maker of them all, the rich will be humbled and the brother of low degree will be exalted; pride and envy will be felt to be equally out of place; hostile and rancorous feelings will be subdued; he that is seeking to be forgiven his debt of ten thousand talents will forgive that of a hundred pence. Surely, if the Sabbath thus kept had been devised for the purpose it could not have been better adapted than it is to promote that spirit of kindness, of equality, of mutual forbearance and regard, upon which the happy working of free institutions so much depends.

But I remark again, that the main effect of the Sabbath, thus observed, upon the purity and consequent perpetuity of free institutions is to be found in its bearing upon the public conscience. This is the point on which everything must turn. Let the public conscience be sensitive and enlightened, and the one indispensable condition of free institutions is secured. This would involve knowledge enough for the successful working of such institutions, but without this they can be sustained by no amount of knowledge, or refinement, or civilization. But the public conscience is often seared, or perverted, and those evils which pervade communities under the sanction of such a conscience, are the last to be seen and thrown off by individual virtue. And not only may a seared conscience fail to see the enormity of such evils, but not seldom does a perverted conscience take sides with them and seek to throw over them the banner of right. This has been so with war, and slavery, and polygamy, and duelling, and the sale of intoxicating drinks. This is so now with many practices sustained even in the church. They would certainly disappear before a sensitive conscience fully enlightened by the Word of God. It is indeed wonderful, since the conscience is that faculty in man which God intended should control all the others, and since its actual power when fully awakened is so great, into what torpor and imbecility it may it fall, and how it will quietly permit and share in general enormities that cry to the very heavens. But in

proportion as the public conscience falls into this state, whatever may be the condition of society in other respects, that confidence, public and private, which is its only cement, will infallibly disappear, the bonds of social order will be relaxed, every right will be endangered, and security will be sought at the expense of liberty. But, on the other hand, let conscience be sensitive and it will prevent all intentional infraction of right; let it be enlightened and it will prevent all violation of it from mistake. It will necessarily draw public attention to every abuse in the customs or institutions of society, and will gradually so correct public opinion as to put an end to those abuses. The law of reason and conscience in the individual will take the place of the law of the land as a formal precept armed with an external force, and society will become instinct with a principle, which, in securing to every man his rights will necessarily secure to him the largest practicable or desirable liberty.

But while this office and importance of the conscience cannot be denied, we shall look in vain to human wisdom for any institution or arrangement designed to render it enlightened and sensitive. Hence its perversion and torpor among heathen nations, and the striking fact, that, where no Sabbath and its accompanying light has not existed, no instance can be pointed out in which an established moral evil has been attacked and removed on moral grounds. Whoever heard of a case among heathen nations in which infanticide, or polygamy, or lying, or slavery, having once been incorporated into the institutions and habits of a nation, has been attacked and eradicated through the native light and power of the conscience of its people? Who expects to hear of such a case? But that the Sabbath cannot be regiously observed by a people having the Bible in their hands, without improving the conscience, is obvious from the very nature of the case. Religious instructions and services, both in public and in private, elucidate and enforce those rights of God and those duties towards him which must include a regard for every right of a fellow-creature which he has constituted, and a performance of every duty which he has commanded. The Sabbath, therefore, is God's institution for training the moral nature of man. It is his appointed school-day for the race, that they may learn lessons of piety and moral goodness; and what sight can be more beautiful or sublime than that of the whole race sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing his words? Then should they know that highest of all freedom with which the truth makes men free; then fraud and oppression would cease; then every individual would understand his duties and his rights; and society, presenting thus, from week to week, an even surface for the impress of divine truth, would be enstamped with the image of heaven.

But since civil freedom is so great and high a result, it may seem

to some strange that it should be secured by an observance of the Sabbath and a cultivation of the conscience, in which that result is not directly contemplated. But this is only in accordance with a great principle, which we find recognised everywhere in the works and in the Word of God, that incidental advantages are always best secured by aiming at the highest possible results. Thus, in a plant, he who should obtain the blossoms and the fruit, would of course have the fragrance and the leaves. Thus, physical well-being is best secured by that exercise which is sought for a further end. Thus, he who seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, shall have all other things added unto him. Thus, he who would find his life, must lose it. Thus, it is always the highest expediency to do right. Thus, when the Sabbath is kept holy, every physical and intellectual advantage connected with it is most fully gained; and thus, when man is trained to become a citizen of heaven, he will be best fitted to be a good citizen in a free republic. It is indeed a high evidence that both the Sabbath and free institutions are from God, that they hold the same relation to something beyond themselves that the chrysalis does to the winged insect, or that the twilight does to the full day; and that free institutions may be gradually merged and lost in the perfect government of God as the light of the Sabbath may fade into the light of heaven.

Having thus shown that a suitable observance of the Sabbath would ensure the purity and permanence of free institutions, it only remains to show, as was proposed, that without the Sabbath these cannot be secured.

The question here is, not whether a people who had never known the Sabbath, but who had days set apart for religious observances, and in whom the spirit of reverence should be cultivated in connexion with a false religion, could sustain free institutions in their purity. Probably the very imperfect, turbulent, and comparatively transient freedom of Greece and Rome would be all that could be reached under such circumstances. But the question is, whether these institutions could be sustained by a nation nominally Christian, who should reject the Sabbath?

And here we must keep steadily in view the contrast between free institutions and others as related to moral culture and influence. Let the forces of despotism be well organized, and everything be subject to minute inspection, and a certain formal and unproductive order—the order of Stagnation and of death—may be preserved all the better for the absence of that general culture and elevation which would fit man for freedom. But a free government, in the last analysis, is self-government. It is simply because men will preserve order and respect the rights of others of their own accord that they do not need soldiers to govern them. But if external force be removed, there is no

ground of security but the power of that invisible and eternal law which reveals itself in the conscience, and makes every man a law unto himself. Make this its keystone, and the arch will not only support itself, but the more it is pressed the firmer it will be. Hence everything that weakens moral restraint tends to subvert free institutions, and hence we affirm that such institutions cannot be sustained without the Sabbath.

And that they cannot, will appear, first, because a rejected Sabbath would of itself become a powerful means of corruption. Clearly it could never be reclaimed to the same uses as ordinary days; and if the sanctions and restraints of religion were wholly withdrawn it would become for the whole nation a day of idleness, with its consequent temptations and vices. It would be the day for the roll-call and general muster of every division in the army of sin, and would do more to undermine free institutions than all the other days of the week. There are portions of this country now where there is far more wickedness on the Sabbath than on any other day; and what shall prevent this city or any other city from becoming like Paris, where—and I wish the fact to be noted—a more numerous police is always abroad on the Sabbath.

But, again, the same thing will appear from the peculiar relation which the Sabbath holds to many of those means and agencies on which the moral elevation of the community depends. This is not, as is sometimes said, the relation of cause to effect, or of the foundation to the superstructure, but that of an essential condition, without which the effect would not take place. This relation does not make the Sabbath less important, but it may prevent its importance from being seen. An end can no more be accomplished, unless certain conditions be complied with, than it can unless certain causes act; and between these there is a broad distinction. The cause of the ignition of powder is the spark; its condition is, that the powder be dry. The cause of the movement of the ship is the wind; its condition is, that it should be afloat. The cause of the falls of Niagara is gravitation; its condition is, the fluidity of the water. If some Archimedes were to move the world, the cause would be the force applied; the condition, a place where he might stand. Of itself the condition can do nothing, and it may be as essential to evil as to good. The ocean may be there and no ship float upon it, or the ship may bear the black flag of the pirate; still, without the ocean as a condition, we could not have the wealth and benefits of commerce; without a place to stand on, the world can never be moved.

Now it is back, among the great essential conditions of moral well-being, that God has placed the Sabbath. It is as the soil to vegetation; it is the place where we must stand to move the moral world, and without it the wants of man as at once a social

and religious being cannot be met. Destroy the Sabbath, and here can be no stated and public recognition of God, and communities would never unite their sympathies before him as the children of one common parent. Public worship, with all its elevating and purifying associations, would cease. The pulpit would be silenced; revivals of religion would be unknown; every Sabbath school and Bible class in Christian and in heathen lands would be disbanded; Christian instruction in families would be diminished, or cease altogether; those great benevolent institutions, whose interests are linked in with the Sabbath, and are cherished chiefly in connexion with it, would languish and die; and every obstacle would be removed to the setting in of one unbroken tide of worldliness and of ungodliness.

Has the true place of the Sabbath now been assigned to it? If so, I may observe again, that free institutions cannot be preserved without it, because the rejection of the Sabbath would be virtually a rejection of God himself.

It is very much from its recognition of the Christian Sabbath, that our Government is known as a Christian Government. Let legislative bodies sit, and judicial processes go on on the Sabbath as on other days, and the chief bond which connects the government with the Bible and with the Christian religion would be sundered. Such a course would be, and it would be so regarded by Christendom, a national rejection of the Christian religion and of the authority of the God of the Bible. But, to say nothing of special judgments, which would assuredly come, no dream can be wilder than that of the possibility of free institutions among a people who should, either nationally and in form, or by silent acquiescence, reject the authority of God. "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity," says Washington, "religion and morality are indispensable supports." Again, he says, "Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." This would not only remove all restraint now connected with the idea of God, but, what would be equally fatal, all the attraction and excitement and high assimilative influence by which alone man can reach his true end. If the current of human life is to flow evenly, it must move on and connect itself with God and with eternity. The infinite alone is its ocean; and when it feels the attraction of this, then its water is clear, and flowers spring up along the banks. But let infidelity cast a dam across these waters and they will stagnate and set back, and the surface of society will become a moral morass, breeding pestilence and death. Here is no middle ground. The rejection by a moral being of his es-

sential good, necessitates the choice of essential evil. Man is not as a tree, which a Chinese gardener can dwarf without deforming. The immortal energies will well up, and if they do not flow in right channels, they must in those that are wrong. Wherever there are capacities groping in vain for their object, or there is the sad consciousness of baffled energy setting back upon itself, there will be either some form of melancholy, or the recklessness of vice. Hence the rejection of God not only does violence to the dictates of an enlightened understanding, but to those intuitive convictions belonging to the very nature of a rational and moral being, through which, far rather than by his understanding, man is linked to the divine government, and from the operation of which, however perverted, his nature must ever be essentially religious. But to suppose, when violence is thus done to the nature of man in its very sanctuary, when the sanctions of obligation, and the central idea that makes of the race one family having a common Father, are removed, that men will ever respect the rights or fulfil the duties implied in free institutions, is utter folly. Every form of evil must follow the rejection of God.

I observe, once more, that the necessity of the Sabbath to free institutions may be seen from the character and sources of the opposition that has been arraigned against it. Here Pilate and Herod become friends. Here infidelity and formalism, despotism and and anarchy, join hands. The Sabbath elevates man, but it has ever been the policy of civil, and especially of spiritual despotism, to prevent that true intellectual and moral elevation which would render the people capable of liberty, by amusing them with shows and sports, and by giving them license to indulge themselves in their lower and vicious propensities. Hence the enormous expense lavished by the Roman emperors upon theatres and gladiatorial shows. Hence the present carnivals and shows at Rome, and the fact that the Sabbath is nowhere kept holy where popery is prevalent. It cannot be. This policy of those who keep them in subjection, the people do not, in general, perceive. They are both pleased and degraded by the license granted them, and at the same time their intellectual and moral natures are so controlled that they either become infidels or superstitiously and fanatically attached to forms. It is as it was of old. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so." Ah, yes! and well might the prophet add, "and what will ye do in the end thereof?" But though the people have generally fallen into this snare, there is yet one instance in which they did not; and the temper manifested by their civil and ecclesiastical rulers showed how vital they felt this point to be. During the progress of the English reformation, the true place of the Sabbath began to be more clearly seen, and the contest between the enemies and the friends of civil liberty often

turned upon this. Indeed, it is remarkable that God intrusted the standard of true liberty only to the hands of those who had already learned to honor his Sabbaths. At one time even the justices of the peace and the judges of the courts attempted to suppress the wakes and sports which had been prevalent in the times of popery. This was resisted by the higher authorities as interfering with ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The justices then "signed an humble petition to the king," in which they declare that "these revels had not only introduced a great profanation of the Lord's day, but riotous tippling, contempt of authority, quarrels, murders, &c., and were very prejudicial to the peace, plenty, and good government of the country," and therefore they pray that they may be suppressed. This petition was not regarded, "and," says the historian, "to encourage these disorderly assemblies more effectually, Archbishop Laud put the king upon republishing his father's declaration of the year 1618, concerning lawful sports to be used on Sundays after divine service, which was done accordingly." This declaration the ministers were required to read from the pulpit, and those who refused, as many did, were turned out of their places. "How many hundred godly ministers in this and other dioceses," says a writer of that day, "have been suspended from their ministry, sequestered, driven from their livings, excommunicated, prosecuted in the high commission, and forced to leave the kingdom, for not publishing this declaration, is experimentally known to all men." Riotous tippling and profaneness were nothing, but a conscientious desire to honor the Sabbath could not be tolerated. Here we see the opposition to the Sabbath of depotism and formalism; the opposition of infidelity and anarchy showed itself in the French revolution. Infidelity is, of course, opposed to the Sabbath; and, so far as I know, non-resistants and no-government men now are almost universally opposed to the Sabbath, and make it the object of their special and virulent attacks. Now, when we see the battle raging so often and so hotly around this battlement on the walls of freedom, we may estimate its importance in the eyes of the enemy. They feel that if they can gain this, their triumph will be sure.

Is it true, then, that the Sabbath, religiously observed, holds such a place in that circle of agencies on which the well-being of a free people must depend, that it would certainly secure to us the unspeakable blessings of that fair inheritance which has come to us through the sufferings and blood of our Fathers? Is it true that it must be a pillar in every social fabric where freedom can dwell, and must hold such a relation to the whole, that if any Sampson of infidelity could pluck it away, the whole structure would come down in ruins? Then are we appealed to, by every consideration which can move a patriot or a Christian, to do what we can to uphold this sacred institution. This is not, as many

seem to suppose, an institution slightly connected with the other arrangements of God. It may seem so at first, but trace its connexions, and you will find it inseparably blending with all the arrangements of God for the elevation and well-being of man. Its law of rest is enstamped even upon the physical organization of all beings capable of labor, whether of body or mind, and in its simplicity and variety of adaptation, like the air, and the light, and the water, it bears the evident impress of the hand of God. How simple! and yet while it meets the wants of the exhausted animal, how evidently was it "made for man" in all conditions and in all his relations! How perfectly is it adapted to the laboring man in his toil, to the young man in his temptations, to the business man in his perplexities, to the scholar in his exhausting processes of thought, and to the statesman as bearing the burdens of public life! How is it adapted to families, consecrating home, and giving opportunity for family instruction; how to communities, as the individuals composing them are related at once to each other and to God, and as needing opportunity both for private and public devotion! How does it blend the social and the religious nature of man, and fit him for a social heaven! How is it related to the Bible, as a book requiring study, and so time for study! How does it connect man with the past, by constantly reminding him of that great event which it commemorates; how with the future, by its glimpses and foretastes of that heaven which it typifies! Kept as God commanded, it would improve the individual man, physically, intellectually, morally. In his social relations, it would secure purity and harmony; in his civil relations, security and freedom. It would unite man to man, and all men to God. Surely, whatever he may intend, he who fights against the Sabbath, fights against the best interests of his race, and against God himself. Surely this Association is engaged in a work of piety and of patriotism in making known the will of God on this subject.

This connexion of the Sabbath with civil liberty, and with every earthly interest of man, I would especially urge at this point upon the attention of civilians and statesmen. Let them understand it, and if not as religious men, yet as patriots, they will honour this day, from the honest convictions of their own hearts; let the people understand it, and they will see to it that no man, whatever may be his talents or his party, shall have their favor, who will disregard an institution so vital to their welfare.

And this leads me to say, finally, that while the Sabbath is thus adapted to man, at all times and in all circumstances, there is much in our present position, as related to free institutions and to the hopes of the world, which calls upon us for special interest in this cause. While, for reasons already indicated, there are always peculiar temptations to violate the Sabbath, and we are to expect at this point the first and not the least violent onset of the ene-

mies of freedom and of religion there is also much in the circumstances especially of our western and southern population, scattered as they are, with imperfect means of education and little organized into societies, which must tend strongly to the desecration of this day. There is, too, pouring in upon us with prodigious and unexampled rapidity a foreign population not trained in the school of freedom, and if they regard the Sabbath at all having generally low views respecting it. This population is of different nations and languages and sects, and being clothed at once with political power and spread over the whole breadth of the land, it must enter as a modifying if not a distracting element into all our political and religious combinations and movements. This heterogeneous mass is taking possession of a country of exhaustless fertility and of boundless resources, and is sitting down under a government where there can be no effectual barrier between the people and their immediate will. If now we add to these characteristics peculiar to this country, those of the age—the general activity of the mind, the triumphs of science and invention, the power of the press, the wonderful means of communication, and the facility with which vast masses may be concentrated at various points—we must feel that the elements are combining which shall prepare the way for scenes such as this world has never witnessed. At present the urgency of want, the facilities for enterprise, the newness and vastness of the country may conduct harmlessly off the elements of evil. But when the population shall become dense and its tide refluent, numbering, as it soon must, its hundred millions, when wealth and the arts of luxury shall be increased, then, what complexity of interests! what prizes for ambition! what means of corruption! Then let the political heavens become black, let the storms of passion be raging, and the waves of faction be heaving and tossing over this mighty ocean, and there is no human power that can prevent the bark of our liberties from foundering and going down. Then will the sun of the brightest morning that ever dawned upon the earth set in storms and in blood. No! no human power can prevent this. If prevented at all it must be by that God "which by his strength setteth fast the mountains, being girded with power; which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people." Our hope is in Him, in his word, in his ordinances, in his Sabbath. Let God be honored in these and all will be well. Let the Sabbath sun, as he returns, look down upon these multitudes going up over the hills of New England and the prairies of the West to worship together—to listen to the voice of God, to unite in prayer and in sacred praise—and the purity and permanence of free institutions will be secured. The "people shall be all righteous," and "shall inherit the land for ever."

SERMON CCCCLI.

BY REV. DR. HUMPHREY.

WAITING FOR A REVIVAL.

"Though the vision tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, and will not tarry."—HAB. II., 3.

IT is to be feared that during the great spiritual drought which has parched the land and been wasting the churches for more than "three years and six months," many professed Christians had been waiting for "the heavens to pour down righteousness," very much as stupid sinners wait for the Lord to come and awaken and convert them. They act as if they had nothing to do and almost nothing to say either to God or man about it. They fold their arms and trust that in his own time God will again visit his people and "pour us out a blessing till there shall not be room enough to receive it."

There is a true sense in which we ought to wait for revivals and there is a false and ruinous sense in which but too many do wait for them. What, then, does waiting in the true and proper sense imply?

1. It implies a sense of NEED. As the Christian who in a time of great spiritual declension is sufficiently awake to look round upon the desolation, "his eye affects his heart." He sees "how the ways of Zion mourn." He sees how the young are growing up and coming upon the stage without religion, while the fathers and mothers in Israel are passing off. With deep concern he watches the tide of worldliness and irreligion as it rises higher and higher and threatens to sweep away what of vital, active piety there is still left from the face of the land, and he feels that nothing but the Spirit of God can arrest it. Then it is that he begins in humble dependence to look up and WAIT for a revival.

2. Waiting for a revival implies DESIRE. There is no consistency or propriety in saying that we are waiting for the outpouring of the Spirit if we feel indifferent about it. And I apprehend that there is at the present moment a great deal more of this indifference, of this spiritual apathy in the churches than the majority of professors are aware of. We are liable to deceive ourselves in imagining that we FEEL much more than we really do. How many among us say that they desire to see God's work revived, perhaps that they desire it more than anything else, while they give no

evidence of it? Desire, where there is anything to be done for the attainment of an object, begets effort; but what are they doing to "prepare the way of the Lord?" Let not the stupid, worldly professor flatter himself that he is waiting for a revival of religion, while he has no real desire for it. If he had, he would shake off his sloth and make the desire known, not in cold professions, but in the use of such means as God has appointed.

3. Waiting for a revival implies EXPECTATION. When we wait for the coming of a friend, it is with some degree, at least, of expectation. We might greatly desire to see him, and to have him come immediately; but if we did not expect him at all, any more than we do that summer will come in mid winter, it could not with any propriety be said that we were waiting for him. No more can it be said that any one is waiting for a revival, if he has no expectation that the Son of Man will come in his power and glory. Is there not reason to believe that many prayers are daily offered up for the speedy revival of God's work, by church members, who do not expect it at all? Nothing would astonish them more. Everything looks dark and discouraging. They pray by rote. They expect no immediate answer to their prayers. They are not waiting for the blessing in any proper sense. If it is ever to come, it is a great way off—much too far off to be expected.

4. Waiting for a revival implies the use of all the means which God has appointed for bringing down the blessing and hastening the time. Among these, prayer holds the most prominent place. With God is the residue of the Spirit. It is his prerogative to "rain down righteousness;" but "he will be inquired of." He expects that if his children want the blessing, they will ask for it, and that they "will give him no rest;" and most assuredly, if they do not faint, if they are "not faithlesss but believing," he will hear and answer and show mercy, "though he bear long with them." Religious conference, also, under the Divine blessing, prepares the way for a revival. Thus "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard." It is when when Christians are engaged in religious converse, that "their hearts burn within them."

Nor do those who really wait for a revival content themselves with speaking to one another on the subject. They turn to their impenitent friends and neighbors, and earnestly exhort them "to flee from the wrath come." Their daily prayer is, "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?" And it is their aim and endeavor to act in the spirit of this petition.

Reader, is it yours? Are you waiting for a revival? Do you see and feel the need of it? Do you earnestly desire it? Do you expect it? Do you fervently pray for it, with an humble reliance on God's great and precious promises; and are you faithfully using

all the means of his appointment? "We are in a great strait. The churches at large are in a consumption; and if God do not interpose they will die. O, when will "the years of his right hand" return? When will Zion again rise and shake herself from the dust? "Hath God cast off his people whom he foreknew?" Are his mercies clean gone for ever? Will he be favorable no more? "He will be gracious. He will answer prayer. He will build again the waste places." "Though the vision tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come and will not tarry." Already are the heavens beginning again to open. Here and there a field is refreshed, and is there not "a sound of abundance of rain?" "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, in wrath remember mercy."

SERMON CCCCLII.

BY THE LATE REV. DANIEL A. CLARK.

"For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."—JOHN iii. 20.

THE more accurately we are able to judge of men's motives, the more fully do we see the correspondence which exists between human conduct and human character. A man's outward conduct develops his creed. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God;" and the unbelieving mind finds daily opportunity to show forth his infidelity. Men whose hearts are alienated from God, have a natural aversion to his truth, as soon as the light of it penetrates the soul. As some wild beasts roam only in the hours of darkness, while by day they are hidden in their lair, so the carnal mind dreads the light, neither cometh to it, lest its deeds should be reproved.

Why does the evil-doer thus hate the light?

I answer negatively—

1. That it is not because error is more intelligible than truth. The entrance of God's Word giveth light. Truth seeks no concealment, admits of no obscurity; while falsehood lives and thrives only in darkness.

2. Nor is it because error is more easily defended than truth. *An attorney* once said that a man can be eloquent in defending the

truth with half the powers which are requisite in order to be eloquent in defence of falsehood.

3. Nor is it because conscience is better pleased with error than with truth. Falsehood is offensive to an honest conscience, nor can it cease to be so, except after protracted abuse.

4. Nor is it because error makes a better character than truth. The whole world are witnesses here, that the more conversant we are with truth, and the more cordially we embrace it, the more do our characters commend themselves to mankind.

5. Nor is it because error makes men happier. Falsehood must inevitably be detected. It is a precarious basis for happiness. Truth only proves an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast.

6. Nor does error suit the necessities of the ruined sinner better than truth. Once open the eyes of men to see themselves as they are, and they find nothing to meet their case but divine truth.

I answer positively—

1. Wicked men hate the light, because it exposes their vileness. When the cellar that has been shut up for years is first laid open, by the opening of windows and doors, it presents a disgusting sight. We wonder how so much filth could have accumulated there. So the dark and wicked heart of man seems unutterably vile and loathsome when God's Word and Spirit enter and illuminate it.

2. Wicked men hate the light, because it exposes their danger. Sin and its consequences are palpably connected. It is a fever in the soul, which of itself is painful. Its presence ensures the certainty of misery. It is a leprosy which must eat up the soul, and subject it to an eternal death.

3. Wicked men hate the light, because it shows the necessity of a better character. The soul in love with sin is agonised with an apprehension of the necessity of reformation. Sinful habits let go their hold with wonderful reluctance. They cry out, "let us alone," and when they are expelled, they are like those howling demons who were driven out by our Saviour. The contrast which exists between good and bad men is painful to the wicked just in proportion as it is perceived.

4. Wicked men hate the light, because it awakens the fear that they will be overcome. They are always found in an attitude of defiance. They cherish the most determined hostility to God, and treat him as a foe. The entrance of light shows God's superiority in goodness and power, while it exhibits the certainty of their ultimate defeat.

REMARKS.

1. God ranks all who hate and resist the light among evil doers. Multitudes pride themselves upon their rectitude of conduct, who yet are, in the sight of God, exceedingly wicked. We see men

abusing the law of God, which is holy, just, and good. We see them abusing the person of God by their neglect of his commands, and the disregard of all his wishes. We see them abusing their own consciences; we see them abusing themselves and their fellow-men by a course of conduct which tends to produce misery here and hereafter. We see them cherishing a spirit which would mar the concord of heaven, and break up the heavenly choirs, and yet glorying in their native excellence, and rejoicing that they are not as other men. Yet so long as they resist the light, they must be regarded as evil doers, and be punished as such.

2. As men grow in wickedness, we may expect to see them growing in hatred of the truth. This may account for the fact that so many discontinue the use of the means of grace.

3. This subject explains the reason that faithful ministers must expect persecution. If they make men see their sins, they incur odium. The man who loves sin, and will not abandon it, will hate the occasion of its constant presentation.

4. We see the cause of the torments of the convicted sinner, and of the horrors of the dying bed; and also why there will be such amazing wrath at the opening of the latter day glory. The pouring of truth in all its pungency and power upon the long-abused conscience, is like the sunbeam admitted upon the animalculæ, who writhe and twist and then expire.

5. We see one of the ingredients of eternal woe. Every lost sinner will spend his eternity in a blaze of light which will fully exhibit his enormity of guilt. There can be no escape from that light which was hated and shunned through a lifetime. Conviction will be thorough, and ever increasing in the bosom of the lost, and this will constitute the worm that never dies.

SERMON CCCCLIII.

BY THE

LATE REV. DANIEL A. CLARKE.

"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—LUKE XV., 10.

WHY does the repentance of a sinner occasion such rejoicing in heaven? Because—

1. IT HONORS THE DIVINE LAW AND GOVERNMENT. The repentance of the sinner proclaims to the universe "God's law is good; his government is just and wise; as long as I was in rebellion I was in the wrong." Whenever the tidings of this repentance come a new tribute of respect is paid to the authority of God."

2. BECAUSE IT ILLUSTRATES THE MERCY AND TRUTH OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST. Exhibition is therein made of the glorious designs contemplated in the covenant of redemption and an earnest afforded that "Christ shall yet see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied," and that all the promises of the Father to his Son shall attain their complete fulfilment.

3. The repentance of a sinner occasions joy in heaven because it DISPLAYS THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST. The third person in the Godhead has equal honor with the Father in the presence of the angels. His influences are ever hallowed in the estimate of heavenly beings, and to their power are ascribed all the peace and love and joy which fill the ransomed soul, and every tear of penitence on earth bears new witness to the all-conquering energy of the Spirit.

4. The repentance of a sinner occasions joy in heaven, because HONOR IS THUS DONE TO THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD. This was given by inspiration of God—the divinely appointed means of light and life to a ruined world, the only charter of man's inheritance of the blessedness purchased for him in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This truth, illustrated and enforced by the Holy Ghost, aroused the conscience and sanctified the heart.

5. The repentance of a sinner occasions joy in heaven BECAUSE IT LESSENS THE NUMBER OF THE ARMY OF REVOLT. There is one heart less to pour out evil affections, one mind less to conceive iniquity, one tongue less to utter perverseness. Shame and defeat are carried into the phalanx of the enemy. Satan and evil men are disappointed by the loss of one upon whose sympathy and co-operation they had relied.

6. THERE IS A LOST AND MISERABLE SOUL RECOVERED AND MADE HAPPY. The sympathies of heaven are kindled into fresh and powerful action when a ruined creature becomes the inheritor of such unspeakable blessedness as awaits the children of God.

7. A FOUNDATION IS LAID, MOREOVER, FOR AN ENDLESS SERIES OF HOLY EXERTION. The converted sinner becomes at once the minister of good to some other soul, and that soul in turn to others still, and eternity only can reveal the results of this glorious chain thus created for the transmission of holy influence.

REMARKS.

1. How hard must that heart be which does not take pleasure in the repentance of a sinner! Such an one could not live in heaven where there is always rejoicing over such an event.

2. If he who takes no pleasure in the repentance of a sinner must in the sight of heaven be regarded as in league with the power of darkness. He has no sympathies in common with holy beings.

3. How precious in the view of angels must be a revival of religion. If the repentance of one sinner occasions joy how great must be their joy when hundreds turn to God.

4. The sinner has presented to him a new motive of repentance. If he will but repent he can make angels happy. The purest and the noblest in the universe are ready to welcome and encourage him as they strike their harps anew and sing the song of redeeming love.

5. The impenitent heart must be a dark spot in the creation of God. Angels would not contemplate the change with such delight were it not that the unsanctified heart is to them the most loathsome object upon which they can look,

6. This subject must rebuke the cold and unbelieving spirit of those professors of religion who hardly know whether the conversion of sinners would give them joy. It would seem a matter of doubt whether there are not some in the church who will feel but little sympathy with the hundred and forty and four thousand who will be gathered together at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and whether they will have any heart to add their cordial Amen to those ascriptions of praise which shall ascend to Him that sitteth on the throne.

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SERMON CCCCLIV.

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THE MANNER OF SELF-EXAMINATION.*

"Examine yourself whether ye be in the Faith; prove your own selves."—2 Corinthians xiii. 5.

Every believer is responsible for the formation, within himself, of an elevated and symmetrical Christian character. The attainment of the most eminent holiness is represented in the Scriptures as the result of the well-directed effort of the individual disciple. This effort will be aided and made effectual by the influences of God's Spirit. But these are co-operating influences; and ordinarily they are given in largest measure to him who uses most faithfully the appointed means of spiritual improvement. Even when God interposes to draw back to himself to those of his children who have wandered most widely from him, there is no exertion of influence which supersedes the activity of the Christian. He must run, as well as be drawn; and it remains as certain that the merely passive Christian will not advance in the Divine life, as that the foot traveller will make no progress without personal exertion.

It is in part from this general principle in the Divine Government that the necessity results for frequency and fervency in prayer, and for the diligent study of the Scriptures. For this reason it is needful for the Christian diligently to cherish the spirit of love and faith, of penitence and humility. From the same principle arises the necessity for the discharge of the duty enjoined in the text. It is a duty frequently inculcated in the Scriptures. It is a duty whose natural influence is, if it be properly discharged,

* It may be proper to say that this Discourse, as preached to the writer's congregation, was designed to follow another founded upon the same text, and treating specifically of the *nature* of the Injunction.

to benefit the intellect, and produce a habit of thoughtfulness; to quicken and invigorate the conscience; to suggest clear views of the individual character, and thus to rectify and enlarge all our conceptions of truth, and cherish the emotions which are appropriate to it. These are its natural influences. They are influences which have been beautifully illustrated in the life of many eminent saints, and which have never been wanting to the spiritual culture of those who have risen most nearly to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Most clearly, therefore, it is the duty of the Christian to examine himself. If he do not, he neglects to obey a positive command. If he do not, he neglects to employ a prominent means of spiritual improvement.

But now the question arises, How shall the Christian examine himself? We admit the duty, but how shall it be discharged? We perceive the privilege, but how shall it be improved? And this is a question of pressing and practical importance. For it is a fact frequently perceived, that even those means of grace which are most clearly of Divine appointment, and which seem to correspond most perfectly with the wants of the soul, must yet be rightly used in order to the production of beneficial effects. They have no inherent efficacy. They will not equally benefit the soul, whether employed in one way or another, rightly or wrongly, prayerfully or perversely. Indeed, unless rightly used, they lose their distinctive character. They are no longer means of grace, but antecedents and evidences of spiritual declension. It is as indispensible that the exercises of the Christian be rightly performed in order to the development of their appropriate influence, as it is that food be rightly prepared and rightly received, in order that it may nourish the physical system. So it is with the study of the Scriptures. If they be studied only at long intervals, and in a spirit of self-confidence and pride, this will rather injure than benefit the soul. So it is with prayer; and so with self-examination. It may be so performed as to be productive of no spiritual improvement. It may be so performed, even, as to produce a morbid and unhealthy rather than a vigorous and active piety. We should infer that it might be so from all analogies, and from the usual laws of God's administration, and from the indications of the Scripture. We know that it is so, because we see the fact illustrated in others, because we have perceived it in our own experience. It is to be feared that there are many Christians who habitually neglect this duty, because they seem to themselves to have performed it in time past without deriving from it the least advantage. Nay, there are sometimes individuals who confess that to them it has been only a minister to pride, or the aid and ally of a fruitless curiosity; an exercise not resulting in new quickness and tenderness of emotion, or in any in-

creased activity in the service of God, but rather in a deeper lethargy, and a more obstinate self-love. The question, then, is one of much practical importance, not for such persons only, but for all. How shall this duty be performed? What is the proper manner of self-examination, adopting and applying which the Christian may derive those benefits from the exercise which are its appropriate fruit? To furnish, in part, an answer to this enquiry will be the object of this discourse.

Of course in this, as in every other religious exercise, in the absence of specific Scriptural directions, the nature of the end to be attained must designate the manner in which it should be sought. That, therefore, is the proper mode of self-examination, by the use of which we are enabled to gain the clearest insight into the facts of our spiritual state, and to compare these best with the law and word of God; that mode by which the habit of thoughtfulness is most effectually promoted, the moral faculty quickened and energized, correct views suggested of our own character, and of all truth, and the appropriate emotion excited and cherished; in a word, that mode by which we gain most rapidly in beauty and strength of Christian character. Keeping in view this general fact, it will not be difficult to ascertain with greater minuteness the true mode of self-examination.

1. And first, this exercise should not be so performed as MERELY TO GRATIFY THE CURIOSITY.

It is a noble field for investigation and thought, which is opened in the soul. Within it lie principles of more importance than are found in the studies of the linguist or the jurist; facts of greater variety and of higher interest than ever reveal themselves in the researches of the naturalist—I had almost said in the records of the historian. It is a truth sublime, almost incomprehensible, that within every human soul there lie the germs not only of all written history, but of that nobler history that never has been written; that here are found the seminal principles from which have been elsewhere evolved the crime and the heroism, the reverses and the triumphs that darken or brighten the history of the past. To examine these principles, to trace these facts, what exercise of mind can be in itself nobler, or in its interest more engrossing! Of the pleasurable mental excitement produced by its pursuit, no man can form an adequate conception, who has not, for a time at least devoted himself to it. In it, all the elements of interest seem to unite. It is the study of practical truth, and therefore attractive. It is the study of truth, the most abstract and recondite; and therefore in yet another aspect exciting and attractive. It is the study of ourselves; and therefore fitted most of all to interest the mind. It invigorates the reasoning powers. It furnishes the imagination with room and motive for continual exertion. It requires, and it

exercises all the faculties of the soul; and therefore it interests them all as does scarcely any other department of human thought. There are no more striking instances of literary devotion than are afforded by men who have spent their lives in studying the soul. Archimedes, meditating upon the properties of the circle, Galileo, studying the stars, and Champollion, deciphering the Egyptian hieroglyphics, are met and equalled in the earnestness of their exertions, by Plato, examining the problems of philosophy, by Leibnitz and Descartes, investigating the sources and laws of human activity. There is danger that something of the same spirit of merely intellectual inquiry may infuse itself almost imperceptibly into the mind of the Christian, as he sets himself to the searching of his heart;—that he will forget that this excercise is only the means to the attainment of self-knowledge, which self-knowledge is in turn to be the foundation of a systematic and persevering self-dicipline; and that, forgetting thus the true design and nature of self-examination, he will become absorbed in it as in itself an END, to be pursued for itself alone, and not for the ulterior and spiritual benefit to be derived from it. There is no danger that it will be so. There are some minds in which it will certainly be so, unless they are forewarned against it. If a man be accustomed to abstract speculation, if it be the natural and habitual tendency of his mind to analyze and dissect, there is danger that he will never truly obey the injunction of the Apostle; that he will study his inner experiences for present pleasure, not for future profit; and a species of intellectual gymnastics, tending to keep the mind alert and vigorous, not as a means of guarding against temptation, and promoting humility. And thus pursuing it, he will fail entirely of deriving from the investigation its highest advantage. He might as well study the abstract treatises of the mental philosopher; he might as profitably engage in the discussion of any question of casuistry or criticism; nay, he might devote himself with as direct a return of spiritual improvement, to the examination of the principles and processes of the pure mathematics, as spend his time in an examination of his own heart, which shall only gratify his curiosity, or strengthen his powers of attention and analysis. We must study for the purpose of improvement,or improvement will not be the issue of our study. Progress in personal holiness, must be the end desired and aimed at, or will not be attained. If it be not, the curiosity may be gratified, but the conscience will not be benefited; the intellect may gain new power to discriminate, but the heart will remain unhumbled, the soul will be no fitter than before for the robe and the crown.

2. But I remark again, that the exercise of self-examination must not be performed EXCESSIVELY.

It would seem at first sight as if there could be but slight danger

of this exercise being pursued to an improper and inordinate degree. It is usually so difficult and often so disagreeable that it would seem almost impossible that anyone should be in danger of confining himself too exclusively to this department of Christian activity—as impossible as that a person should become so addicted to the use of an unpleasant medicine as to endanger the continuance of the physical health. But there are sometimes those whose disposition it is to keep the eye of the soul continually turned in upon its own processes, who are by nature and as the result of their mental constitution, introverting, self-questioning persons, always doubting the reality of their experiences, always inclined to scrutinize and suspect. And there are sometimes others who seem to be free from this natural bias of mind, who yet become so habituated to the exercise of self-scrutiny, as to feel in it a singular delight and to be unwilling to exchange it for the other and equally imperative duties to which the believer is also called. Just as—to resume the comparison—just as persons do sometimes become so accustomed to the use of medicinal drugs, improbable as the fact would certainly appear to a merely "à priori" reasoner, that such stimulus seems necessary to them, and their spirits sink and their natural food becomes distasteful.

To guard against this possible danger it is important to keep in mind the fact that self-examination, useful and even essential as it is in its own sphere and its proper relations, is always to be connected with the use of other means of spiritual improvement. It is not the only duty which God enjoins, nor the only means of grace which he has graciously provided. He has given us faculties for apprehending other truth than that which lies within ourselves, and he demands that we use these faculties. He has made us social as well as personal beings, and therefore it is the law of our constitution that in order to receive from the truth that impression which shall be most lively and permanent and influential, we must meditate upon it in company with others as well as retire within the recesses of our own souls and there examine our hearts. The most careful and diligent self-scrutiny can never supersede the searching of the Scriptures. From these alone can come that light beneath whose illumination we can explore the solitudes of the heart—those principles that must direct and aid us in our study of ourselves. One's eye will become contracted, and its very angle of vision will be changed if it be continually bent to the examination of his own person. He must frequently lift it from himself and let it sweep the horizon and rise to the study of the stars if he would preserve its clearness undimmed, its beauty and excellence unimpaired. And so the Christian must examine the truths that lie around him and beyond him—above all he must survey often and long those sublime realities of redemption and immortality which hang as luminous orbs above the darkness of

the world, if he would strengthen and purify his spiritual vision. To this end he must search the Scriptures. He must be regular in his attendance on all the appointed means of grace. He must be frequent and earnest in prayer—ever remembering that the discharge of one duty cannot compensate for the omission of another, and that self-examination is only conducive to the highest well-being of the soul, when it is united in symmetrical proportion with the other appliances of spiritual strength.

And while self-examination in order to be truly beneficial is thus to be connected with other means of spiritual improvement, it is also to be continually subordinated to active effort in the service of Christ. If it be not it is certainly excessive, and from it there cannot be derived the highest profit. It is a truth, borrowed indeed in its expression from an almost pagan philosopher, but worthy always to be kept in mind by the devoutest Christian, that "the highest end of being is an Action, not a Thought—though it were the noblest." God made men to be active as well as meditative beings, to work as well as think, to exert an influence upon others, as well as to grow up themselves. To this end he has gifted them with various powers. He has endowed them with faculties fitted for exercise and gaining strength by every act of exercise. He has given them the power of movement, the desire of influence, the faculty of speech. He who forgets that active exertion in God's service is the end of his being, shows thereby that he overlooks the arrangement of God's providence, and forgets his own true dignity and trust. He should be the almoner of God's blessings, not their repository—an active distributor, not a passive recipient. In this world "God and the angels are the only rightful spectators;" and only he who remembers this and acts upon it will attain the full stature of spiritual manhood. There is something dwarfing to the soul either in inactivity, or in activity that terminates upon itself. Of such a state the pure result is debility and disease. The soul will become timorous and suspicious. It will lose its strength of resolve and its self-reliance. It will find fears in the way, and the grasshopper will seem a burden. Its hope will want assurance. Its faith in God will almost fail, and there is danger that all its conceptions of religious truth will become indistinct and confused. There is a law here against which there is no rebelling, and from which there is no escape. It is no more certain that the prisoner, confined to a few square feet of space and forbidden to go beyond them, will lose in physical strength and mental manliness, the buoyancy of his spirits, and the clearness of his intellect, and the courage of his heart; it is no more certain that the artisan, compelled to retain for successive hours in the same heated atmosphere the same unnatural position, will thereby be doomed to premature decrepitude, than it is that the soul which devotes all its energies to the scrutiny of itself and never passes that narrow

circle in which it is wont to walk, and never heartily enlists in enterprises of philanthropy, will lose the brightness of its hope, and the energy of its faith, and will be made fearfully conscious that it is not growing in grace nor fulfilling the design for which God sent it hither. Let us see to it, my Christian brethren, that while we are diligent and careful in the study of ourselves we are also active in the cause of Christ. We must go abroad in life. We must distribute of God's bounty as He distributes of the rain and of the light to even the evil and unthankful. By our life and by our words we must preach to all the precious Gospel of the Lord whether they will hear or forbear. Doing our duty to ourselves we must not leave undone our duty to others. If we do we shall lose the power to benefit ourselves. If we thus isolate one duty from the rest and break that glorious circle ordained of God and set like a rainbow in the moral heavens, our very self-communion becoming excessive will become injurious. Our inactivity will be the fruitful parent of unbelief and error, the light of God's countenance will be withdrawn, and the joy of his salvation will no longer abide within us.

3. But I remark again, that the self-examination of the Christian should be performed regularly.

It is a singular fact that the mind having once operated in a particular mode finds it thereafter more and more easy to act in the same mode. It is a singular fact, one hardly to be fully explained, when we remember the essential spirituality of the soul and its independence upon the body. But that it is a fact, the observation and consciousness of every man bears witness. It is from this fact that the necessity arises for regularity in every mental and spiritual exercise. Such regularity in the past goes far to ensure its continuance in the future. What has been the uniform habit of the mind will not be omitted; certainly not without causing the fact of omission to rise into distinct cognisance. And while less easily omitted it will be more easily performed; since every time the soul put forth its power it gains a new facility in putting it forth in future in the same direction to the same end. And thus the exercise which has become regular and habitual, will be performed not only the more easily, but more accurately; no part being omitted, and the final result being attained with greater certainty, as well as with greater celerity. Thus it is obviously and always with the exertions of the physical system. Thus it is as uniformly, and almost as obviously, with any intellectual process or spiritual act. Thus it is with SELF-EXAMINATION. The man who performs it only when opportunity offers, will soon find that opportunity ceases to offer. If he discharge the duty irregularly, he will ere long cease to discharge it; or, if he continue to do it all, it will be only after long intervals, and always as a hard and

unpleasant task. He must, indeed, often scrutinize the act at the moment when it is most vividly before the mental vision. And doing this frequently he will come at last to do it spontaneously without the consciousness of effort. But even then the regularity of the exercise must not be intermitted. Just as the student must devote his usual hours to the prosecution of his studies, if in that prosecution he would be most successful; just as the merchant must transact his affairs in those parts of the day to which he has been accustomed, if he would have his intellect clear, and therefore his plans successful; just as the Christian must pray regularly if he would pray earnestly, making his prayer, as was said by one of old, "the Key of day and the Lock of night;" just so must he sat apart a stated season and consecrate it religiously to the purposes of self-scruting, if he would find himself gaining the clearest views of his own character, and adding most rapidly to the sensibility and the strength of his moral affections.

4. And again: The exercise of self-examination should be performed EARNESTLY as well as regularly.

There is always danger that the exercises of the Christian will be indolently performed. This very frequently may furnish excuses for negligence, and the regularity of their recurrence may tend to make them matters of mere routine. This is a tendency which results directly from both the inertness and the sinfulness of the Christian. It is therefore a general tendency, extending to all his spiritual exercises, though of course affecting some more immediately and obviously than others. There is danger that a man will study the Bible rather as a matter of custom than as a source of present and personal advantage; that while the eye is following the words of inspiration, the soul, in all the energy of its faculties, may be planning a mercantile transaction, or searching out a new source of enjoyment, or at best, contemplating some collateral truth of science or history, rather than summoning its whole resources to grasp and master the verities of the Gospel. And so there is danger that the Christian may study himself, not with singleness of attention, with energy of endeavor, but listlessly and lazily, as if the work were to be easily accomplished. His efforts must correspond, indeed, with the character of the object to be examined. For there are some acts and states of the soul that cannot be separated from all others, and held up in sharp outline to the mental vision; whose moral qualities are so faintly defined that the mind must catch them at a glance, as the eye catches the delicate blush of the evening sky, or the first star-beams that sparkle through it. But even then the glance must be penetrating. There must be nothing languid in the action of the soul. There can be no growth in grace produced by a self-examina-

tion which is not earnest. There is a good effect resulting directly from the act itself; for it is an act of obedience, an act of piety. But this effect will be altogether unattained if the scrutiny be not earnest, for there is no obedience and no piety in an act of the soul that is simply prompted by habit and routine. There is a wonderful awakening of the conscience and rectification of all the conceptions of truth when one seriously and resolutely studies himself. But there is no such effect, and there can be none when the study is hasty and superficial. It is impossible that a man should see the beauty of a landscape, that his eye should note and his memory retain its characteristic features, the curve of its hills and the course of its streams, and all the varied relations of valley and field and village and city, while all the time his mind is extracted from the scene, examining a fact of science, listening to a discussion of policy, recalling a tale of suffering. And much more is it impossible that the Christian should gain a clear conception of his own character while his thoughts are elsewhere, in his business or in his pleasure, calculating the changes of the markets, or meditating some scheme of future enjoyment. He must be earnest in the work, or he cannot be successful. Calm, indeed, as it befits him to be who is engaged in a work requiring more than almost any other the clearest perception and the coolest analysis; but still remembering that inactivity is not calmness; that is the true tranquillity of mind which is the accompaniment and the result of high activity, which is the fruit of fixedness of purpose and earnestness of effort. The Christian who would thoroughly search his heart must shut his eye to all things else, and steadily survey the facts of his inner life, bending to this one purpose every energy of his soul, expelling from his thoughts all foreign subjects, and striving with all the calmness, but also with all the earnestnsss of a man whose every faculty is awake and at work, to examine himself. He must familiarise his conscience with the eternal principles of duty. He must accustom it to apply these principles with rapidity and certainty to the infinite variety of human volition. He must teach it to trace the act to its source; to discriminate between that which is voluntary, deliberate, and that which is indeliberate, instinctive; between the transgression which is the result of wilful perverseness, and that which is unintelligent, the creature of ignorance; between that ignorance which is manifestly culpable, and that which has its origin in events and circumstances lying beyond the range of individual responsibility. Thus only will he be conscious of quickened progress in the way to heaven. Thus only will he attain the end of his labor, and be made meet for the kingdom of God.

5. And I remark again, fifthly, that the exercise of self-examination must be formed *HONESTLY* as well as earnestly.

There must be no shrinking from that self-knowledge to which it leads us, and no unwillingness to accept its revelations; but a single desire to learn the truth, and, having learned, to profit by it. It is easy for the selfishness of the soul to embody itself in form, and clothe itself in costumes that shall be wonderfully deceptive. Often it is only to be detected by the closest examination and the most searching analysis. And so great is the strength of human depravity, and so pervading its influence, that even the Christian is in danger of attributing that to the principle of benevolence, which really results from the selfishness of the heart. Our depravity resembles in some points those physical diseases which are silent in their progress, and slow in their manifestation, only because they are deeply seated and almost certainly fatal; and just as the gangrene is to be defected in the wound by deep and painful probing, and the true type and character of unseen disease is only to be determined after the most careful comparison of diagnostics—just so is it demanded that that self-scrunity which shall discover the presence and the power of sin shall be careful and earnest. And as the physician must apply the probe and examine the system, regardless of the reluctance and pain of the patient, so must he who searches himself be honest in the examination, though for the time it cost him a suffering that is like the cutting off of the hand or the plucking out of the eye. It will be painful to discover that deeds of apparent charity have been really the result of the love of applause. It will be painful to find that the articles of belief which we have defended most vehemently, and upon our adherence to which we have possibly rested our hope, are held by us rather because they flatter our pride or suit with our interest, than because our conviction of their truth is intelligent and prayerful, the result of devout and deliberate thought. It will be painful to discover that our religious emotions derive their apparent tenderness and strength rather from sympathy with others, or from the circumstances in which we are placed, or from the peculiar state of the physical system, than from a clear and comprehensive view of the glory of God's character, and of the unspeakable preciousness of Christ's atonement. But if the fact be so, the Christian must not shrink from the discovery. It will be a profitable pain; a pain which may be to him the occasion of wonderful advances in spiritual strength. He must not fear to feel his weakness. If he do, he cannot know for what succour to apply. He must not be unwilling to know his guilt. If he be, his self-examination can never correct his views of himself, or illustrate the glory of redemption, and the largeness of God's grace. No, the Christian who would derive spiritual profit from his self-communion, must not only sit down regularly to survey his state as a moral being, but must be willing to know the worst; resolute to look steadily in the face the terrible realities

of need and guilt. Thus will he be humbled by it. Thus will his faith in Christ be quickened, and his penitence for sin made true and deep.

6. If the time permitted, I might remark, sixthly, that the Christian should examine himself PRAYERFULLY.

He should do so, because it is the natural influence of prayer to make the soul humble and honest, to tranquilize the mind, and to elevate the heart; and, therefore, he who searches himself prayerfully will not only be likely to do it more regularly and more earnestly, avoiding equally remissness upon the one hand and excess upon the other; but will do it more humbly and more thoroughly; will survey himself from a higher point of view; will be quicker to detect a sin, and readier to confess it. Above all, the Christian should examine himself prayerfully, because under the divine administration prayer is the appointed antecedent of spiritual blessings; and only he who rises from his closet to the scrutiny of himself, can look with confidence for those influences of the Holy Spirit which are needed to fit the soul for that "retiring inward" through which, as St. Bernard has pithily expressed it, we must "ascend upwards."

7. But passing thus hastily a point upon which I should love to dwell, and whose importance would demand for it a more extended survey if it did not commend itself so readily to every Christian, I proceed to remark in the seventh and last place, that the Christian should examine himself with a constant reference to the character of Jesus as the perfect standard.

The comparison of the character with some higher and absolute standard is obviously an essential element in self-examination. It is not enough that the phenomena of the spiritual state be themselves ascertained. They must be tested. Their character and tendencies must be tried by appeal to an unerring tribunal. If they are not thus tried the good effect is lost which would be otherwise realized, if even a positively evil influence is not exerted by the investigation. The true character of the inner life will hardly be detected. There is danger that the soul, blinded by sin, may come gradually to overlook the guilt that clings to its holiest things, and may even cease to discriminate between the slighter gradations of moral character; and thus that the final result may be a spirit of self-confidence instead of dependence, of pride instead of humility. The occasional sin may thus grow into a habit, and the prevailing selfishness of the heart may gain new vigor, and assume new authority from the very exercise which should have tended to overthrow its authority and destroy its power. It is only when we compare the state of our character with the eternal principles of Right revealed in the Word of God, that the exercise of self-

scrutiny will develope itself into its appropriate fruits, of pious feeling and holy living. And herein it is that we see one ground of the necessity for the revelation of the man Jesus Christ. There were other ends higher than this, attained by the incarnation and obedience of the Son of God. They were necessary as elements in the basis of the sinner's justification, as illustrating the holiness of the law, and vindicating its authority. But they were needful also as furnishing in the character of Jesus, a perfect standard for all succeeding generations, which Christians may strive to imitate, and in comparison with which they may feel continually their own unworthiness. In this character, therefore, were combined the purity of the loftiest abstract principle, with the individuality and attractiveness of the strictly personal character. It embodied a beauty higher than Plato imagined in a life as real as Plato lived. It is united with divinity, and therefore impressive; and yet it is human, and therefore clothed with all that is attractive in similarity and sympathy. No Christian can rightly meditate upon it, none ever did thus meditate upon it, without discovering more fully his own depravity. It has been sometimes imagined that certain species of electric light yet undiscovered, might so illuminate the body that seats of disease should be perceptible, which were before unknown, and causes of weakness be discerned, that had never developed themselves in actual debility; and so the light which comes from the life of Christ, illustrates the presence of sin where it was least suspected, and shows our need of continual support. By such an examination must the Christian's conscience be quickened, his humility deepened, his penitence increased. The production of such effects rests upon laws of mental operation with which all are familiar. The painter gazing upon a Madonna of Raffaelle—the sculptor admiring the matchless symmetry of that wonderful Apollo, which all of after time have united in attributing to an almost creative chisel—are humbled, yet animated as they look. They see more clearly than before their own defects; but only because their very Ideal of beauty is heightened and made more distinct; and thus in their present discouragement lies the promise of their future progress. It is upon a nobler form than any Apollo that the Christian looks. It is by gazing upon a higher beauty than that of the richest coloring that the Christian is humbled; even upon the beauty of the inner life of Him, the glory of whose outward form no pencil of the painter has been able to reproduce. His humility, therefore, shows that his conscience is impressed. It is at once the ground of a present penitence and the pledge and promise of a future and more consummate holiness. Oh, my friends, let us ever study ourselves in full view of the character of Jesus; with his high and passionless purity contrasting always our low ambition, our craving appetite, our struggling and tumultuous passions. Thus shall our hearts burn

within us by the way. From every act of such self-scrutiny, we shall rise up refreshed and purified; with consciences more sensitive; with minds more open to the influence of the truth; with higher aspirations; with new resolves.

My Christian friends, the subject we have considered addresses itself to us. There is always danger that the Christian will neglect to examine himself. His constitutional indolence may unite with the pride of his heart in prompting to this. The tendencies of a particular era may set so strongly towards outward and visible action, as naturally to divert the soul from the scrutiny of itself. So it is, emphatically, at present. The calm, contemplative piety of the fathers is almost forgotten, is certainly not imitated; and an aggressive activity, sometimes regular and wise, and sometimes impetuous and impulsive, has usurped its place. There is now, therefore, peculiar danger that we shall not study our own hearts. Against this we are bound to guard. Knowledge of self is always useful, and the power to gain it a high prerogative of the soul. But to us as Christians this knowledge is indispensable; for without it we cannot know our points of weakness; we cannot know for what to pray. There will be sources of danger within us of whose very existence we are unaware. Proclivities to sin may be slumbering in our hearts, which only need a fitting occasion to develope themselves in the vilest excesses. Passions may be dormant there, that in some moment of incaution shall spring upon us, in full panoply, and with an unimagined strength, like the Spirit of evil, when touched by the spear of Ithuriel. We are therefore false to our trust if we do not examine ourselves; if we do not so study our hearts, as to be profited thereby. To this end we must be watchful and vigilant; not so searching ourselves as merely to gratify the curiosity, nor as if we were unmindful of other means of spiritual improvement, but examining ourselves with the same regularity with which we come to the house of God; doing it with earnestness of attention, and with an honest and prayerful desire to learn the truth, and to be benefited by it. Above all, we must TRY our character, comparing it constantly with that mind which was in Christ Jesus; that so we may gain new vigor of Christian principle, and new activity in Christian duty; that from our rigorous self-scrutiny, under the influences of the Spirit of God, may spring a piety more grand in its symmetry, more beautiful in its coronal of love, richer in all the fruits of holy living; that we may here experience a truer penitence, a more contrite humility, a more triumphant faith; and that at last, being strengthened with might by the Spirit of God, we may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know that love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

SERMON CCCCLV.

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THE PLACE OF REST AND HOME OF THE SOUL.*

"As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place."—PROVERBS 27 : 8.

A most important lesson, which has a legitimate application to MANY, if not all the relations and duties of life, is taught in this text, and enforced by a very simple and striking comparison : "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place."

The text needs but to be stated in order to be understood. It is taken for granted, that the allusion is to that class of birds, with which we are all familiar, whose instinct prompts them to select a particular place for the building of their nests. The natural skill of such birds, in selecting THEIR PLACE, in the process of erecting, excavating, or searching out natural or artificial fixtures and retreats, to be occupied by them during the period of procreation and incubation, is sufficiently well understood by us all. The watchfulness, steadfastness of purpose, industry, and fidelity of such birds during all this period, is so characteristic of them, that when we know where they have reared, or chosen their nests, we know were they are to be found, unless driven away by necessity or danger. When the end for which the tenement was chosen, or made, is accomplished—then, and not till then, is it deserted. Very few, indeed, are the exceptions to this rule, and such exceptions are fatal. The eggs of the wandering bird are barren, and its brood dies from neglect.

No matter how beautiful their plumage—how gaily and sweetly they may sing, or how graceful may be their motion, in their roaming among enticing fields and flowers, if they neglect THEIR HOME, they might as well have no home. A silly bird, indeed, is that which wandereth from her nest!

It is implied in the text, that some persons, some professedly rational, intelligent, moral, and accountable beings, are chargeable, in their sphere of activity, with a similar inconsistency and folly.

It is here assumed that every man MUST HAVE A PLACE, which is, by distinction and pre-eminence, "HIS PLACE." The man who

* It is due to the author of this discourse to say, that it was written without the thought of its publication, and is printed without revision.—EDITOR.

squanders what he never earned—the man who steals for a livelihood, the man whose heart knows no bond to home and cherished friendships, to whom the face of a stranger is as acceptable as the face of a friend, who can find all he aspires after in eating, drinking, and sleeping, no matter where—in seeing, no matter what, in being seen, no matter by whom—in short, the individual who has no roots to his hearts, nor fixed sympathies in his soul—such an one may float like a feather upon the wind—may have no place, nor be fit to fill one if he had;—it is not of such vacuities that the text speaks, but, as you perceive, it is of a man—foolish, it is true, but yet a man.

A man must have a place—his own place. He must have a place of business, if we look at the subject in the light of fixed worldly avocations—a place where he can steadily pursue his calling—where he can be found, where his energies may take root, and his industry be productive. If he wanders away from this place, his projects will be addled projects. Go to the places of trade for an illustration. Is the merchant a wanderer from his counter and counting-room? Is the mechanic away from his shop? Is the market-man away from his stand?—the business of such persons will prove a failure.

The same is true of professional men. They must have a place and times, when and where each may be found in his place. The family must have a place, and that place should be a home—not a mere contingent dormitory and refectory, as is the case with multitudes, but a home, where the kindly sympathies of the heart may expand, and be schooled into the habits of well-regulated social affection, and useful living. But not to particularize further in the way of tracing out the parallel implied in the text; I pass now to the opening and application of the subject in a more important point of view than has been alluded to in the foregoing remarks and illustrations.

Man is something more than a creature who eats and drinks and sleeps; he has other and higher interests than those which pertain to the worldly avocations in which he is engaged, and the domestic and earthly kindred ties in which the merely social sympathies are enlisted. I speak not disparagingly of any worldly calling, nor of the pure ties of the heart among those who love and are beloved; but there is a Being who is more to man than any other being. There is a place for man which is, by the highest moral distinction and pre-eminence, his place. That Being is God! and that place is the right attitude of man's soul towards God.

God is the great centre of being, in the moral as well as in the natural world. In the compass of all surrounding beings and things, God's is the soul's polar point of rest, his heart's home—HIS PLACE.

The similitude of the magnetic compass may be employed, appro-

priately, in the illustration of this idea. You have seen that wonderful and beautiful piece of mechanism, the magnetic compass—you have seen the polarized needle quiet at its place of rest; you may have caused it to forsake its place temporarily by the application of some foreign controlling force, and when you withdrew your hand, no matter to which of the other thirty-one points you held it, is swiftly returned to its own place. Now, God is to the rightly disposed heart of man what the pole is to the magnetic needle—his place. The needle of the soul—the supreme and ever constant affections of the heart, should point to God.

The fall of man destroyed the spiritual polarity of the human heart, but divine grace restores it, in regeneration and sanctification. The partially sanctified heart may yield to temptations, and, like the needle, follow some interposing foreign influence away from its place, but as the needle shows its restlessness, and speeds back to its point with tremulous haste, so the truly pious soul is restless in its wanderings, and, breaking away from the seductions which may have caused it to depart temporarily from God, it flies, as with the wings of a bird, to its place; and the Psalmist interpreted the feelings of such a one when he, under Divine inspiration, exclaimed, "Return to thy Rest, Oh, my soul!"

Show me a man whose supreme affections are fixed upon, or following after other beings and things, than God and his glory, and you see one who is out of his place—the needle of his heart has no right temper. The merely speculative believer in God, the indifferent believer, and the blank Atheist meet here on the same ground; having eyes they see not, having ears they hear not, having hearts they feel not;—God, as the object of love, is not in all their thoughts—selfish fears or a respect for men, operating upon such persons, like external commotions upon a deranged needle, may sometimes jar and force them (if I may so express the idea) towards God, but the place of their rest is elsewhere; they rival the serpent in crawling upon the ground, and in satisfying themselves with dust.

"As a bird that wandereth from the nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place." Foolishness is personified in each; and, as the eggs, or the brood of the bird that wandereth, shall prove barren or die, so shall the hopes of the sinner be cut off; he shall be driven away in his wickedness, having despised the place, the only rest of his soul, in the time of seeking a place, and rest,—he will at last be provided with a place where aversion to God will be punished, and his misery will be equal to his folly and guilt.

God appointed to Judas a place, to which we are told he went, when he died; and of the positive and eternal wretchedness of his condition we may be well assured from the language, "it were better for that man, if he had not been born."

Thus interpreting the text, in the light of Divine Revelation,

we may resolve the whole of what has been said into the following general proposition. God is the alone proper and satisfying rest of the soul of man; and an attitude of supreme love of God—the practical surrender of all we have, and are, and hope for, to Him,—this is man's only proper, and safe, and truly happy place.

I shall assume this proposition as proven by the Word of God and the experience of men, and shall proceed to another view of the subject—after pausing a moment to clear away a plausible refuge, behind which the unregenerate man sometimes retreats. Do I read this unuttered thought in any breast?—"Well, I am happy in the place I now occupy, and I make no professions of being indebted to the machinery of the Cross of Christ and the Holy Spirit for my happiness. I do not see anything to disturb my comfort, though I make no profession of being a Christian." Consider! may not a man dance, and revel, and exclaim, "I am happy," over an undiscovered mine of gunpowder? May not the play go on on the stage, and the crowded boxes of the theatre exhibit a multitude of absorbed and happy countenances, while the undiscovered flames are running underneath, from casement to casement, stealing the march of fear, and cutting off retreat from sudden and terrible death?

The scoffer tells us that ignorance is the mother of devotion—God forgive the taunt and sneer!—while I ask if it may not be true that ignorance is sometimes fool-hardy, when there is just cause for alarm? Did the gay reveller but know of the existence of the mine, or did the crowded company of the theatre know of the fire beneath them—think you they would be happy in these supposed places.

"Nay!" it is replied, "this is but a supposed danger." Well, drop the supposition then, as proving only this—that present happiness and unconcern are no evidence of present security, and then we fall back upon the declarations of God's word—"when they cry peace, peace, then sudden destruction cometh upon them;" "he that hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

If it be ignorance to believe this Book, whose credentials are engraven upon the monuments of the past, and are growing brighter and brighter in the fulfilment of prophecy, every day, then our's be that ignorance; for well assured are we that the weak things of God are wiser and better than the strongest and best things of men. God's truths, like His sun, are warm and luminous to those that feel and see, albeit some men are both torpid and sightless. We will yet believe that "the fear of the Lord (the reverent homage of the soul towards God) is the beginning of wisdom;" and in the place of one who thus fears the Lord we would stand—nor envy the place of "the fool," who says in his heart "there is no God,"

But I would fain hope that there are none here who really doubt the truth of the proposition—that God is the alone proper and satisfying rest of the immortal soul; and that an attitude of supreme love and practical submission to Him, in all that we have, and are, and hope for—is the only proper, safe, and truly happy place for man.

Regarding this as settled, let us now pass from the consideration of what God is to the soul of man, in and of Himself, to the place which man is required to occupy in this world, before men.

God is not only the rest of the soul that loves Him, but He claims it as his right to be acknowledged as such, in a public manner, and has defined with sufficient accuracy a rule for the government of men in this respect.

Under this division of the subject, let me crave your attention to the following particulars:—

1. God has instituted a visible church in this world, made up of professed believers in Him, and willing subjects of His moral government. The terms of admission into this visible church are genuine repentance towards God, on account of sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the ground of acceptance with God; thus the penitent sinner believeth with his heart unto righteousness, and then coming worthily to the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, he becomes visibly a party to the covenant of which these ordinances are the outward signs and seals; and doing this, with a truly penitent and believing heart, he makes confession with his mouth unto salvation.

Such, in brief, is the visible church of God in this world, in respect to the character of its members and the terms of admission. This is the place where all men ought to be—that is, they ought to repent, with godly sorrow, of their sins; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and come out before men upon the Lord's side.

That some make the public profession that is required, without genuine godliness, is very manifest; but that it is the duty of all to be and to do what professing Christians profess to be and to do, there is no doubt. The whole constitution of the visible church is for the glory of God and the good of souls; and it is man's highest duty, and most precious privilege, to be a member of this spiritual family of God.

God now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent. The language of Christ, in the Gospel, as addressed to everyone who reads or hears the Gospel, is, "Follow me!" Moreover, He solemnly declares that he will confess, before God and the holy angels, those who confess Him before men; and that he will, on the other hand, deny those who deny Him.

As the first and highest relation of man is the relation he sustains to God, so his first and highest duty is to God; with this

relation and duty nothing must interfere; whatever comes between God and the soul, in this respect, must be put out of the way, be it father, mother, sister, brother, houses or lands, business, pleasures, or honors—all must yield place to God, the Creator, and to Christ the Redeemer.

In order thus to show your obedience and supreme attachment to Christ, you, my dear hearers, must have a place in the family of His professed friends here upon earth. You must not only be His friends, but you must wear the badge of His household. It is an honor and privilege, as well as a duty, to which He calls you; and if you slight the call, you despise His authority and grace, and wrong your own souls. Where His commands and promises centre, that is the place for you to occupy, the ark of safety from which you may not turn away. But do any of you say, "May I not be a Christian without a VISIBLE profession of my faith?" I answer, Christ will confess those who confess Him. Do you still ask, "How must I confess Him?" You must repent, believe, be baptized in His name, obey his dying injunction respecting the showing forth of His death, in the Lord's Supper, and cleave unto Him, and to His people, in a well ordered life, conduct, and conversation.

In short, you must have a definite place somewhere among the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ; your soul must have A HOME in the house and family, in the love and service, in the covenant and promises of God.

2. This duty of belonging to the visible family of God, and wearing the badge of Christ's disciples, is one which is not discharged by the single act of being added to the church—in the ordinary initiatory rites of a public profession; but we are to have, and to hold a place, in some one of the assemblies of God's people—as our peculiar home, where our hearts may take root. The roots of a tree cannot be often disturbed with impunity; and that is a not less significant than beautiful figure of inspiration, in which the children of God are represented as cedars planted in the courts of the Lord's house, and whose branches are ever green.

What would you think of a tree whose roots were adapted to locomotion, and whose branches served the purpose of sails to catch every changing breeze? Or what would you think of a bird that was as much at home in any other nest as in its own? A strange tree indeed! a witless bird!—so he is a strange, witless, unprofiting and unprofitable professor of religion who easily forsakes his spiritual home. "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is he that wandereth from his place."

3. It may be observed, that when a change of relation becomes necessary, from one branch of the visible family of God to another,

as sometimes happens, in consequence of a change of residence, or from other causes, in such a case, it is doubtless the duty of persons so situated, to fix upon their new heart's home—their place, as speedily as is consistent with a proper regard to their future well-being. As a tree long out of ground will die, though dropped in the most luxuriant garden, so the Christian must be fixed somewhere, in the soil of gospel ordinances, or he will wither, and bear no fruit.

I may take this opportunity (without digressing from the legitimate bearing of this subject) to allude to a class of persons whose conduct has frequently caused me grief, and to whom a special word of counsel and reproof, in love, is due.

Not a few, who have been steady attendants upon the means of grace, and members of churches, in the places of their former residence, upon removal to this metropolis forget the necessities of their souls, and yield themselves up to floating impulses, to a fondness for novelties, and to the gratification of a roaming curiosity.

Failing to identify themselves early with the interests of Christ's kingdom in any one place, they are to be seen wherever the eddying tide of impulses carries them.

Temporary gratification, rather than permanent good, attracts them. One Sabbath finds them in THIS part of the city, and another in THAT—in the morning HERE, in the afternoon THERE. A frost comes over the heart; the tone of spirituality becomes languid; personal religion is neglected; the place of prayer is not frequented; temptations assail them with a power they never experienced before; they form worldly associations; religous associations and ties are relinquished; their consciences are silenced (not satisfied) with the thought that no one knows that they are professors of religion; they backslide further and further, till, on their sick beds, they are not unfrequently found doubting the validity of all their past hopes, their last moments are embittered with fears and remorse, and shrouded in despair.

The evil I have here hastily depicted, not from fancy, but from painful facts, is a great evil, and prevails most, so far as my observation extends, among YOUNG MEN.

If I speak in the hearing of ANY whose case has been here described, of any age, or sex, or condition, let me say to such with affectionate earnestness, you are in jeopardy! You are the pity of the wise, the sport of devils, the companions of the simple. "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place."

If these gates of Zion are pleasant to you, then come with us, and we will seek your spiritual profit and peace—for this rebuke is not in anger, but in love; but if greater spiritual advantages invite you elsewhere, then fix your place there, and be steadfast. Of all homeless men, he is the most homeless, most to be pitied and re-

buked, who has no rest for his soul in the embrace of Divine Love, no home in the sanctuaries of God, no place in the garden of God on earth, where by the dresser's care he may be prepared to be transplanted to the garden of God above.

Finally, brethren and friends, let me exhort you all to see to it that you are really in the soul's only proper and safe place. Some men spend their lives very near the place, but never come quite to it. Some of you are members of the visible church, and can be numbered by the eye of men; are you members of the true church, whose names are written in the book of God? Many will be disappointed in the last day, when they shall knock and say, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" to whom He who hath the keys of life and death shall answer, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."

Many more have been standing near, and have been in many ways useful to the temporal interests of the church, who, like the scaffolding of the ark, or of the temple, will be rejected at last as no part of the church itself, having never been really incorporated among the living stones which are cemented and builded together upon the only foundation, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed, yea, thrice blessed, is the man who hath A HOME FOR HIS SOUL!!! The pious Psalmist saw and felt the beauty and force of the comparison between the bird's chosen place, and the heart's rest, as he witnessed the sparrows frequenting the beams and rafters which sheltered the altars of the Most High; and happy is he, who with an earnest spiritual longing, and joyful relish, can say, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee. Selah."

Most sweet and precious are the promises of God to such:—"They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

It is when we can say from the heart—"Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth"—that we can also from the heart offer the prayer, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

"They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh," and to such, the patient waiting of the soul on God is a weariness; but the truly devout Christian, whose soul hath a home in God, exclaims, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand;" and

looking onward, beyond the wreck of visible worlds, and the paling away of created suns, and moons, and stars—he sees a divine glory gilding the eternal mount of God and the mansions of the redeemed; and feeling within himself the life of God, and the resurrection power of Christ, and the earnest of the Spirit; he takes up the note which yet lingers on Isaiah's harp-strings, and with the film of death on his eye, and the roar of Jordan in his ear, he triumphantly sings—"The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

But alas! how different, how sad, is the condition of the impenitent, unbelieving, wandering, homeless sinner's soul. Every tie of his heart is an earthly tie, destined to bleed; every hope of his heart a deceitful hope, destined to die; he has not made God his REST; his fixed sympathies are in the household of God; like a wandering bird he visits the altars of the Lord, but he does not dwell there. He must have a place! Death holds a mortgage on his body, and he must lie down in the grave; then he will no longer wander up and down any more. The violated law of God has a claim upon his unpardoned, unsanctified soul, and for all such souls a place is provided;—no light, no glory, no promise visits that place; it is the home of Dives and Judas; of all who have denied Christ, and made this world their chief joy. Between that home of the impenitent, the unbelieving, the disobedient, the ungodly, and the mansions of the redeemed, an impassable gulf is fixed by God; upon the latter, radiant glory from the face of the Lord God and the Lamb, eternally shines; over the former, eternal darkness, that can be felt, reigns.

Lord of Hosts, when thou gatherest thy saints together, that have made a covenant with Thee by sacrifice, may we be there; but, O! gather not our souls with sinners.

SERMON CCCCLVI.

BY THE LATE REV. DANIEL A. CLARK.

THE DANGER OF FALSE MAXIMS.

"I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart to add drunkenness to thirst."—Deut. 29 : 19.

THIS is a maxim which Moses, the inspired servant of God, puts into the mouth of ungodly men. It is a sentiment as prevalent in the present day as in the age in which it was uttered. The principle is this: Our present conduct will not affect our future condition. It disassociates deportment and destiny, and says, "Whatever I may now be, it shall be well with me hereafter, 'let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'"

Let us now proceed to examine this maxim with a view to ascertain whether it be a safe one for the regulation of our conduct. That it is not a safe maxim is evident, because

1. It is contrary to all analogy. Human conduct is uniformly productive of results, good or ill, according to the character of that conduct. There is a powerful principle of reproductiveness in both character and condition. Economy and industry are usually followed by independence and respectability. Intemperance, negligence, and dishonesty, by degradation, want, and shame.

2. It denies a state of probation. This state of being is one in which all are forming their character and condition for a future world. The maxim in question is at variance with this divine arrangement, as it alleges that our character here has no relation to our estate hereafter.

3. The maxim confounds virtue and vice. It confounds them in their results. If the laws of virtue have no sanctions they are mere advice. Thus the flood-gates of iniquity are opened on a miserable world, and our standard of character is found in the words of the Psalmist: "A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees." Might makes right.

1. The maxim is at war with men's best interests in the present as well as in the future life. It removes restraint from the evil passions. It throws the reins upon the neck of the most unhallowed lusts. A community acting upon this principle would soon become annihilated. A few only of the mightiest in physical strength could survive the experiment.

5. The maxim denies the existence of God or denies his attributes. If there is a God he must have given his creatures a law,

and that law must have sanctions. It cannot be that he is indifferent to the dishonoring of his law.

6. The maxim is unreasonable. God cares for the happiness of his creatures. He provides for the happiness of brutes, and yet more for that of man; but how can he care for the happiness of man, if he has endowed him with such passions and laid no restraint on him?

7. The maxim would go to prove that God often loves the wicked more than the righteous. If it be well with all alike in a future world, the earlier we die the earlier we are blest. On this principle, when men are cut off by the judgments of God for their iniquities, they are shown to be the favorites of heaven. Thus the old world went to heaven before Noah; the inhabitants of Sodom were suddenly taken to heaven when Lot was left to wander a vagabond on the mountains.

8. The maxim is unscriptural. The Bible teaches that this life is the seed time, eternity the harvest. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." The Word of God in its history, its promises, its exhortations, its warnings, its threatenings, goes to say that the maxim is a lie.

REMARKS.

1. We should beware what sentiments we imbibe, as they will surely affect our characters. Bad sentiments make bad men, while the contemplation of sacred truth tends to make men holy. We may not unfrequently judge men's characters when we know the school in which they were bred.

2. The maxim under consideration originates in the desire of a depraved heart. Men wish that their conduct may not affect their destiny. Wishing they assert, and asserting they at length believe.

3. How strange it is that men can be so blinded as to live in accordance with such a maxim. The falsehood of it is written not only in God's word, but on the conscience and in the experience and the observation of all men. Consciousness testifies against it. He that does right is happy, while the "way of the transgressor is hard." We have seen that analogy is against it; the glutton is diseased; the drunkard destroys himself; the idle are improvident and poor; the vicious are finally hated; the deceitful are found out and detested; the dishonest gain at length the bad reputation they deserve.

Verily it is a proof of the blinding power of sin, that men can be found living in accordance with maxims the falseness of which is as manifest as the sun in the heavens.

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SERMON CCCCLVII.

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ON THE LIFE AND DEATH OF REV. DR. CHALMERS.

And unto one he gave five talents.—MATTHEW 25: 15.

It is a beautiful feature of the creation that uniformity everywhere blends with itself variety. The stars that light up so brilliantly the evening sky, bear to a superficial gazer substantially the same appearance; and yet astronomy, not less than Christianity, has certified to us the fact that "one star differeth from another star in glory." The landscape which at first opens upon us merely as an extended field of verdure and brightness, reveals on a closer inspection a thousand variegated tints, each of which is a legitimate subject both of reflection and of admiration. The pebbles of the brook, the flowers of the field, the trees of the forest, each of the various forms, both of mineral and vegetable existence, possess common properties, while yet each particular specimen is, in some respects, different from every other. The whole animal creation has something in common, and each of the several tribes has more; but here again, whether you compare the tribes, or the individuals composing the tribes, there is no end to the diversity which they exhibit. And what is true of the inferior orders of being, is true of man also: wherever you find man, you find him in all his essential characteristics the same; and yet need I say, that he ranges from a little above the brute to a little below the angel?

This inequality that pervades the human race, is one of the lessons conveyed by the parable in which we find the text;—I mean the parable of the talents. And in the text itself there is a reference to the highest number of talents ever bestowed;—in other

words, to an individual most highly favored in respect to both character and condition. What constitutes the distinction here referred to?

I answer, it is the possession, in an eminent degree, of whatever may be used for the benefit of ourselves and our fellow-creatures, or for the glory of God. Let us glance at two or three of its leading elements.

I may mention, first, high intellectual endowments;—a mind originally constituted with extraordinary powers, and subjected to the most vigorous and efficient culture. I may mention also a highly favored moral constitution;—that native energy that never tires, that native frankness that knows not how to dissemble;—that native generosity and sympathy that respond instinctively to every tale of woe. And then there is the image of the heavenly deeply enstamped upon the soul by the Spirit of God; there are the Christian graces shining out with unwonted attraction; there are the fervent breathings of a spirit which lives in the atmosphere of Calvary or at the foot of the throne. And last of all (for I will not include in the present estimate great riches, however legitimately they *might* be included), there is the providential arrangement of circumstances favorable not only to the highest development, but to the most useful application, of the various faculties;—an arrangement at once creating facilities and supplying inducements to beneficent action. Wherever you find an individual in whom these various characteristics meet,—one who possesses a richly endowed mind, and a noble spirit, and an exalted Christian character, and who withal occupies a station of dignity and influence, there you find one possessing the five talents. He stands upon an eminence which few ever reach. He is among the greater lights in the firmament of illustrious minds.

It may perhaps occur to you that I am scarcely warranted in speaking of eminent piety in this connexion as a talent, inasmuch as the parable takes for granted that the several talents referred to, whatever they may be, are not only all to be accounted for, but are liable to be perverted, and thus to bring condemnation and ruin to their possessor. I do not use the text in so strict a sense as this objection would seem to imply. My object is to consider it, not chiefly illustrating human responsibility, but as pointing to the highest style of human character;—to character considered as the production not of nature only, but of grace. Every good gift that we receive,—everything that is fitted to advance either our happiness or our usefulness, comes from God: and surely that richest of all gifts,—the gifts of an exalted piety, is not only to be referred to the same infinite benefactor, but is to be referred to him in a far higher sense than any other of his favors; for while these are to be regarded as the fruit of his common bounty, that in-

lves more immediately the sacrifice of his Son and the agency his Spirit.

But if all the talents that men receive come from God,—if erything that enters into an exalted character is, in some sense, production of his agency, it is manifest that wherever such a aracter is formed, He has his own purposes in reference to it. were presumptuous to suppose that we should be able to com-hend *all* his purposes in respect to anything; but some of the ds which He designs to accomplish—actually does accomplish, raising a few individuals to an extraordinary elevation, we y discover at a glance. I will specify two or three of them. I say then, God designs by this part of the economy of his pro-lence, to exalt our conceptions of the dignity of human nature. Think not, from the announcement of this thought, that I am ing to utter anything that is inconsistent with evangelical hu-lity. Far be it from me to attempt to throw a veil over the dis-ler, the degradation, the ruin, that hath overtaken man, in nsequence of his having become a sinner. All the Scripture tements on this subject I would not only submissively receive t earnestly enforce as exhibiting the sad reality of our condi-n. But allow me to say there is danger that, from our being nversant with man in his fallen state only, and especially from r being familiarized to the grosser effects of human depravity, may actually form too low an estimate of him as a piece of the ine workmanship, may fail of exercising a due respect towards r own nature, may undervalue that inward germ of strength d immortality, that susceptibility of being moulded into an gel, that still remains, notwithstanding all the darkness and the eck that sin hath occasioned. I know not in what God hath pplied a more effectual antidote to this delusion, than in this ry arrangement which we are contemplating; in planting here d there in the intellectual and moral firmament a star of sur-ssing brightness, in which man may see as if reflected by a rror, the dignity of his own spirit. You have been contemplat-g man in that creature of ignorance, whose dark and chaotic nd you may interrogate, but it answers nothing; or in that crea-re of sensuality, whose whole life is a struggle to efface every ine lineament from his soul; or in that creature of vanity or ridliness, who envies the butterfly the beauty in which he is shed, or the serpent the dust on which he subsists. Turn now d contemplate this same being in one of the brighter forms of man existence; in some intellect that has been richly endowed d nobly trained,—in some heart that beats in generous and hal-wed pulsations. Mark the kindling of the celestial fire,—the rking of the immortal energy. Now the faculty of reflection of reasoning is put in requisition; and the remoter relations of ings are reached perhaps by one searching glance, and not im-

probably new fields of thought are opened, in which the intellect of the world may labor for an age. Now the memory is set at work; and behold it is giving forth, as from an inexhaustible storehouse, treasures of knowledge and wisdom which we marvel should have been accumulated within the compass of a life. And again, the imagination begins to glow; it soars into regions where the eagle's path is not known; it opens to our view worlds of its own creation; it paints with a divine pencil, and in colors that were mingled and prepared in Heaven; it moves in a radiant course to perform a glorious work. And while the intellectual faculties act with such mighty power, the moral faculties are obedient to the dictates of truth and wisdom. There is a conscience full of light and strength, that would dictate the endurance of the heaviest calamity, rather than the commission of the lightest wrong. And there is that highest form of virtue, which indeed includes every other, magnanimity: you can prescribe no sacrifices too great for it to submit to, no enterprizes too difficult for it to accomplish, in behalf of sinning, suffering man. I am not pointing you to a perfect character, because the individual who bears it is yet upon earth; and yet such a character as I have described,—great intellectually, great morally, great spiritually, sometimes actually does appear, shining out from amidst all the world's darkness; and I leave it to you to say whether every such character is not a substantial witness for man's inherent dignity.

And to what practical use, my friends, shall we turn this reflection? Oh, is not the world full of beings, who have not learned to respect themselves as the creatures of God and the heirs of immortality? And even those of us who profess some higher appreciation of the greatness of man's nature, and who are accustomed to think of him in his relations to God and eternity,—do not even *our* views of this subject need to be corrected and elevated, that we may labor both for ourselves and for others as the magnitude of the case requires? Devotee of the world, idolater of fashion, creature of sensuality, bring before thee some illustrious model of human excellence, and human greatness, and remember that the same nature which thou art contemplating belongs to thyself also; and say whether its noble faculties are not worthy of being trained for a noble destiny; whether thou art willing to remain in degradation, when intelligence and purity and the life everlasting may be thy portion. Christian, hold the same object to *thy* thoughts,—a fellow creature whom God hath made great both by a creating and a renovating power; and then look abroad upon the multitude who are meanly and madly pouring contempt on God's workmanship in their own persons, and say whether it is not worth a greater effort than thou hast yet put forth, to elevate them to their legitimate dignity, and render them suitable companions for the angels. Nay, turn thine eye inward, and inquire whether thou

t doing enough for the culture of thine own spirit;—whether be not chargeable to thee as a fault, that thou art so inferior in owledge and holiness and dignity to some who share the same ture, live in the same world, and have been trained substanally under the same influences with thyself.

Another reason why God raises a few members of the human mily so much above the rest is, that they may take the lead the great work of renovating the world.

That this world is hereafter to undergo a mighty moral change, rresponding to the change from darkness to light, is ascertained us by the promise, and I may add by the providence, of God. he world even now is, to a great extent, a theatre of crime and ffering. Men deliberately invade each other's rights, make war on each other's happiness, shed each other's blood. Multides cast out from their minds every thought of God: they abjure legiance to him as a sovereign; they refuse to do homage to him a benefactor; and if not formally, yet virtually and in their arts, they vote him out of his own world. But this state of ings will not last for ever: it is to be succeeded ere long by the iversal reign of truth and virtue and happiness. The world om having been an Aceldama will become an Eden; its winter ason will be past; its storms will be over and gone; the Heams will bow themselves to smile upon it and commune with it, a regenerate world; and myriads will shout forth their thanksving that God has fulfilled his promise in creating a new earth.

But this change, vast as it will be, is to be accomplished by man instrumentality. If nothing more than the fact that it is to cur, had been revealed to us, we should have expected no doubt at God would come forth in the majesty of a miraculous agency r its accomplishment; but instead of that, he sets his own chilen at work, and he works in all their efforts, and one of the ightest honors which they will wear in Heaven, will be that ey had been joined with him in the blessed co-operation. But hile the whole sacramental host of God's elect are thus put in quisition, and while the labors of even the weakest and the mblest may be turned to good account, each one laboring in s proper sphere, it is manifest that there are needed for the conct of this enterprize, spirits endued with unwonted discernment d energy and purity;—bright and heroic minds that can comehend the whole world in their benevolent regards, and diffuse eir influence everywhere, like the breath of the morning. And we actually find some individuals of this exalted character, *who* n doubt that they are raised up for this very end; that they ful their mission chiefly by concentrating and directing the enerss of the church for the redemption of the world?

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But this change, vast as it will be, is to be accomplished by human instrumentality. If nothing more than the fact that it is to occur, had been revealed to us, we should have expected no doubt that God would come forth in the majesty of a miraculous agency for its accomplishment; but instead of that, he sets his own children at work, and he works in all their efforts, and one of the brightest honors which they will wear in Heaven, will be that they had been joined with him in the blessed co-operation. But while the whole sacramental host of God's elect are thus put in requisition, and while the labors of even the weakest and the humblest may be turned to good account, each one laboring in his proper sphere, it is manifest that there are needed for the conduct of this enterprize, spirits endued with unwonted discernment and energy and purity;—bright and heroic minds that can comprehend the whole world in their benevolent regards, and diffuse their influence everywhere, like the breath of the morning. And as we actually find some individuals of this exalted character, *who* can doubt that they are raised up for this very end; that they fulfil their mission chiefly by concentrating and directing the energies of the church for the redemption of the world?

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great enterprize has ever been projected and brought to a successful issue, but that some master-spirit has been identified with it. Who but Abraham laid the foundation of the Jewish economy? Who but Moses carried the people of Israel through the wilderness, and became the permanent law-giver of the nation? Who but Joshua conducted the enterprize that secured their settlement in Canaan? Who but Solomon built the temple? Who but Paul gave the decisive impulse to Christianity, which was so quickly felt to the ends of the earth? Who but Luther and a few illustrious associates, erected the standard of the Reformation, and carried terror and trembling to the very heart of the Papal power? Who but Washington delivered our country from political thraldom, and gave us a name among the free? Who but Wilberforce stopped the traffic of the British nation in immorality, and finally brought about the deliverance of the slave? In these several cases, there was indeed a multitude of hearts beating, and a multitude of hands employed for the accomplishment of the respective objects; and yet there was not a pulsation nor a movement but the ruling spirit animated and directed it. Those great men were the primary agents; and can we doubt that He who made them great, made them so in reference to the work which he had designed for them?

Another reason why God thus distinguishes some of his creatures is, that mankind may have the benefit of a pure and lofty example.

There is a power in example which we are all ready enough to acknowledge, but which perhaps none of us suitably appreciate; and it may reasonably be questioned whether most men do not actually accomplish as much of good or evil by this insensible influence, as by any course of direct and positive effort. A good example produces an atmosphere in which virtue flourishes and vice decays; whereas a bad example represses the energies of virtue, and gives to vice a more deadly luxuriance. The world in its present state would seem to have a fearful preponderance of selfishness and iniquity; and there needs to be a strong counteracting influence to prevent the farther progress of evil, and especially to advance the great cause of human renovation. Whenever a man distinguished for his greatness and goodness appears, there are multitudes who take knowledge of him that he is good and great; and God means that what he does and what he is, shall be copied into the habits, the characters, of those who come within the range of his influence. One end for which the Son of God descended from Heaven was, that there might be in this dark world one perfect example; and can we doubt that his design in raising up those who share in human imperfection and depravity, and yet approach nearest to the perfect standard, is to bring true greatness in contact with our very senses, so that we may always have before us specimens of what man may become, even

before he reaches the fulness of the stature of a perfect person in Christ.

It is an evidence of divine wisdom that each successive generation has its own illustrious examples, besides having, to a great extent, the benefit of those which have gone before. History embalms a few of the noblest minds of every age; and though they may have passed off the stage centuries before we came upon it, yet in the record of what they were, we can sit at their feet and learn from them lessons of exalted wisdom. We cannot, however, gain such vivid impressions from the dead as from the living; and hence the living great and good are always among us;—if not the greatest and the best, yet those who far exceed the ordinary mark of human endowment and attainment. Let the silent teachers of the past then be duly reverenced; let every monument of what they were be sacredly cherished and diligently studied; let their very graves be resorted to as places where Wisdom's voice is heard:—but let us keep our eye upon the living as long as we can; and when the grave claims them, let it be our privilege to reflect that they have done that for us which death cannot undo, and that we have a treasury of hallowed recollections and impressions derived from our observation of their example, which are already incorporated among the elements of our virtue and our bliss.

And yet another reason,—the last which I shall mention,—why some individuals are thus specially honored of God, is, that by their departure from the world, they may render Heaven more attractive to us as the gathering place of illustrious minds.

Here where faith exists in so much imperfection, we need all the help that we can command to enable us to gain even a feeble impression of the things that are not seen and are eternal. Revelation has indeed carried her light up to the gate of Heaven,—nay to the very throne of God; but even where her light is the strongest, she has left mysteries that will yield only to the experience of the glorious future. When I have gathered from God's word all those bright passages that are designed to tell me what Heaven is, and when I have reverently and earnestly inquired concerning the sublime import of each, I feel that my conceptions of that glorious world are infantile and unworthy; and I anticipate with joy the day when this seeing through a glass darkly shall make way for the higher privilege of seeing face to face. But meanwhile I know not how to strengthen my impressions of the reality and glory of that world better, than by contemplating it as the resting place of those exalted minds, in whose light I have been privileged here to linger. Who does not look towards Heaven with more veneration and rapture, because Abraham and Moses and David and Paul are there; because all the great and good who have come out of the tribulations of the world are there; especially because the Son of God, part of whose history relates to a sorrow-

ful sojourn and a mighty work on earth, is there? They have all lived and labored and suffered here; and here the history of many of them remains; and here their influence is still felt; nay, if the Saviour himself and two of the old saints be excepted, each one of them is still represented on earth by a part of his own person; for their dust is here in the keeping of the Resurrection and the Life, waiting to be re-collected and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. Oh, brethren, does not this reflection make Heaven so real that everything else seems shadowy? Does it not bring it so near that we seem to be refreshed by its gales, to be entranced by its melodies? Does it not give us such a sense of its glory, that we are sometimes ready to say in the spirit of a holy impatience,

"Fly swifter round ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day?"

Yes, ye illustrious minds, sharers with us of a common nature, ye were inhabitants of the earth once, but ye are inhabitants of Heaven now; and our hope of Heaven is the richer and the sweeter, because we know that ye are of the number of its glorified population.

One of earth's most gifted and venerable minds has just passed away to mingle in the scenes beyond the veil. Scotland was the country of his birth, and the immediate field of his labors; and to her will belong the honor of building his sepulchre, and of giving up his venerable dust into the Redeemer's hands at his second coming. But his name, his character, his influence, she cannot monopolize; they belong to the world; and they will descend as an inheritance through all coming generations. And let me say that, as his life belonged to the world, so does his death also;—a fact impressively demonstrated by the air of deep sadness which the tidings of his death produce, wherever they circulate. It is this feature in the dispensation,—the fact that a light has been extinguished that shone upon the whole world,—at least upon all Protestant Christendom, that renders it a fitting service for *us* to commemorate his exalted character; and though I cannot suppose that I am speaking to more than a very small number who have ever heard his voice or seen his face, I feel persuaded that I am not speaking to an individual who is indifferent to the greatness of my theme; not one who does not heartily respond to the sentiment that the world has lost a benefactor. It is only a hurried and exceedingly imperfect notice that I shall be able to take of him; but even though I should say nothing that is not familiar to all of you, I shall not regret having spoken; for I shall at least have given utterance to my own sense of his exalted worth, and shall have held up to your contemplation and imitation a character of superlative excellence.

Doctor CHALMERS was born at Anstruther, a small village in

Fifeshire, March 17, 1780. His parents were worthy, respectable people, in the middle walks of life. Having graduated at the University of St. Andrews, he determined to devote himself to theology as a profession, though it would seem without any adequate sense of the nature of true religion, or the claims and responsibilities of the Christian ministry. After being licensed as a preacher, he officiated, for some time, as assistant to a clergyman at Cavers, near Hawick; but after a brief sojourn there, he removed to Kilmany in 1803, where he labored for several years, and where occurred at least *one* of the most memorable events of his life. It was nothing less, as he himself regarded it, than a radical change of character. Previous to that period he seems to have looked upon the duties of his profession as a mere matter of official drudgery; and not a small part of his time was devoted to science, particularly to the mathematics, to which his taste more especially inclined him. But having been requested to furnish an article for the Edinburgh Encyclopedia, on the evidences of divine revelation, in the course of the investigation to which he was led in the prosecution of this effort, he was brought into communion with Christianity in all its living and transforming power. He not only became fully satisfied of its truth, of which before he had had only some indefinite and inoperative impression, but he discerned clearly its high practical relations; he surrendered himself to its teachings with the spirit of a little child; he reposed in its gracious provisions with the confidence of a penitent sinner; and from that hour to his dying hour, he gloried in nothing save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. He stood forth before the world strangely unlike what he had ever been before. There was a sacred fervor, an unearthly majesty, in all his utterances, and all his writings. Scotland, Britain, the world, soon came to look at him with wonder, as one of the brightest luminaries of his time; as destined to exert a controlling influence upon the age, if not to mark an epoch in the world's history.

It was of course impossible that such a mind as he had now shown himself to possess, should remain buried in a comparatively obscure country charge; and hence we find that in the year 1815, he was translated to the Tron church of Glasgow. His appearance there awakened an intense interest through the whole city; and it was quickly found that there was a far higher effect produced by his ministrations than mere admiration;—that the sword of the Spirit, wielded with such unwonted energy, was doing its legitimate work: for worldliness could not bear his rebukes; skepticism could not stand erect in his presence; while a pure and living Christianity was constantly reproducing itself in the hearts of some or other of his enchained auditors. It was in the year 1816 that he was called to preach before the King's Commissioner, in the High Church in Edinburgh; an occasion that was signalized

by one of the most magnificent efforts which even *he* ever put forth. The discourse occupied what was then a comparatively unexplored field,—the reciprocal relations of theology and astronomy; a subject upon which he afterwards poured still more exuberantly the riches of his genius, in that incomparable volume which has long since become, in its way, one of the wonders of the world.

In 1819 he was removed to a new Church in the Parish of St. Johns, where, for several years, he continued to exercise his ministry with undiminished popularity and usefulness. In 1823 he accepted an appointment to the professorship of moral philosophy in the University of St. Andrews; and though this was a new sphere of labor, it was one for which his previous habits of thought had abundantly qualified him, and in which he acquitted himself with the highest honor. In 1828 he was called to the theological chair in the University of Edinburgh, which his genius and piety continued to adorn and elevate, till 1843, when he vacated it by reason of the disruption of the Church of Scotland. As he was the master spirit of that great movement in the beginning, so it continued to engross his energies to the last. He has since not only discharged the duties of a professor of theology in the Free Church, but has been charged directly or indirectly with almost every interest belonging to the new enterprize. Not a small portion of the Christian world will concur in the opinion that his last labors were the most important of his life; and that there is no point from which his character appears so glorious, as from amidst the sacrifices and struggles that attended the disruption.

Notwithstanding he had reached a good old age, he had so much of vigor and elasticity still remaining, that those who felt most deeply the value of his life, ventured to hope that a few more years at least might be added to it. But the tidings of his death went forth as if a thunderbolt had burst from an unclouded sky. The week before, he had returned from a journey. The day before, he had attended public worship. The evening before, he had passed with his family. And that very morning on which his spirit took its upward flight, his voice was to have been heard in the supreme judicatory of the church. But he came not from his chamber at the accustomed time, and the delay awakened anxiety; and when inquisition came to be made, lo! the earthly tabernacle was all that remained! We might have wished indeed that he could have been advertized beforehand that death was approaching. We would fain have known what were the last words which his lips would have uttered; what would have been the actings of such a mind as his, when the glories of Heaven were shining down upon it through the night-clouds of death. But who, after all, will say, that an

instantaneous transition may not have been better for *him;* that it was not the very highest privilege he could have enjoyed, to be awakened from his slumbers by a voice saying, "Come up hither?" I can imagine there was something of the glory of a translation there. The bidding farewell to friends was dispensed with; the dying testimony to the value of the gospel was dispensed with; the protracted physical agony that often attends the last hour, the watching of the monster's progress towards the end of his work—all, all was dispensed with; and that glorious mind had the passage of only one conscious moment from earth to Heaven. Venerable saint, we thank God for his goodness to thee in thy death, no less than in thy life!

The intellectual character of Dr. Chalmers was distinguished chiefly by its wonderful combination of the imaginative, the profound, and the practical. If there be on earth, or has ever been, a mind constituted with greater power of imagination than his, we know not where to look for it. It might be represented by the brilliancy of the sun, the beauty of the landscape, the terrific roar of the cataract, the soft grandeur of the evening sky; or rather by all of them in exquisite combination. And because he was so pre-eminent in respect to this quality, I am inclined to think that some have underrated his more strictly intellectual powers;—his ability to comprehendthe more distant bearings of things, or to grapple with the subtleties of abstract philosophy: and they have reached the false conclusion, on the ground that it were impossible that a mind so highly gifted in the one respect, should be alike distinguished in the other. But if his productions may be allowed to speak for him, I think it will be difficult to show that he was not equally at home in the depths as in the heights; and some of his works, particularly that on Natural Theology, exhibit the two qualities blended in beautiful proportions. I hesitate not to say, that any man who could reason like Chalmers and do nothing else, or any man who could soar like Chalmers and do nothing else, or any man who could contrive and execute like Chalmers, as is evinced by his connexion with the whole Free Church movement, and do nothing else, would be a great man in any country or in any age; but the union of the several faculties in such proportion and in such degree, constitutes a character at once unparalleled and imperishable.

Nor were the moral qualities of Dr. Chalmers less striking than the intellectual. The first thing that would occur to you on meeting him, was his perfect simplicity and humility,—the absence of everything that indicated even the consciousness of his own superiority; and this became more and more a matter of admiration, as it was seen in connexion with the kindling of his faculties under the influence of some exciting topic. And then there was a frankness, an honesty, which impressed itself upon

you from the moment that he opened his lips; you felt that you were in contact with a guileless spirit, that was incapable of taking an unworthy advantage. There was a melting tenderness that vibrated quickly to every note of sorrow; there was a winning condescension that seemed to annihilate the distance between himself and the humblest visitor; there was a noble generosity that cast a withering look upon everything mean and selfish; and above all, there was a lofty enthusiasm, which burned to his inmost soul, and which, perhaps more than anything else, gave the complexion to his life. His countenance, while in a state of repose, might not have particularly arrested your attention; but when lighted up by thought and feeling, it became quite another thing: it was a mirror that reflected all the graces of the mind, and all the graces of the heart; and sometimes it was pervaded by such a flood of illumination, that it would remind you of Stephen, whose face is said to have shone like that of an angel.

Such being the intellectual and moral constitution of Dr. Chalmers, it is not difficult to account for what he was in the various spheres of public action; especially when it is borne in mind that his faculties were thoroughly baptized with the spirit of Christianity.

It were to be expected that such a man should be, as he actually was, a prince among orators. For his mind was a soil in which great thoughts were produced spontaneously. It was a region of incomparable beauty, full of glorious images, that seemed like so many reflections from the upper paradise. It was a fountain of heavenly fire, that darted into other minds with an irradiating and electric power. It is generally conceded that the highest efforts of eloquence are the effects of sudden and strong impulses, and so far at least as the language is concerned, are unpremeditated; for in a process of great mental elaboration, neither the imagination nor the sympathies are likely to be enlisted. But with Dr. Chalmers it was quite otherwise. He wrote nearly everything that he uttered; but so well balanced were the intellectual and the moral in his constitution, and so harmonious was the action of one part of his nature with the other, that his most elaborate compositions were often those into which were infused the deepest feeling, and which in the delivery produced the highest effect. If you were to hear a preacher described as doggedly chained to his manuscript, with his head bowed towards it, with one hand keeping his place, and with the other sawing the air, you might not improbably ask where such a man was to be found, but it would be only that you might be sure to keep out of his way. And yet this was the manner of Chalmers: but in spite of this manner, he held his audience as by a spell: it was as if they were

gazing upon a dark cloud, when the lightnings were playing upon its bosom; as if they were contemplating the waves of the ocean borne mountain high on the wings of the tempest; as if they saw the heavens spanned with rainbows, whose varied hues had gathered an overpowering lustre; as if Hell had unbosomed herself, making her tortures visible and her wailings audible; as if Heaven had lifted her portals, and disclosed to mortal vision her crowns and thrones, and whatever else goes to constitute her glory. I remember to have heard one of the most intelligent men in Scotland, and yet not one who sympathized with Dr. Chalmers in his religious views and feelings, remark, that he had heard from him strains of eloquence, especially on one occasion on the floor of the General Assembly, which not only greatly exceeded anything that he had ever heard from any other person, but he fully believed equalled the highest efforts of Demosthenes himself.

What has been said of the mental and moral qualities of this great man, may farther explain to us the fact that he was so eminently a philanthropist. There was not a department of human want or woe that escaped his wakeful and discerning eye; nor one which his circumstances allowed him to reach, in which he was not an active and efficient laborer. He sympathised with the slave under the wrongs which he suffered, and lent his eloquent voice and eloquent pen for his redemption. He remembered the perishing heathen, and was the life of every project for sending them the gospel, that was started within his reach. He considered especially the cause of the poor, in relation not only to their own intellectual and moral education, but to the common benefit of the race; and to this the energies of his great mind were especially directed. I do not undertake to pronounce upon the soundness of all the views he may have held, or the expediency of all the measures he may have urged, in connexion with this general subject; but that he labored in this cause as if he were acting under the influence of a ruling passion,—that in general he labored with great wisdom as well as great energy, and that his labors tell and will tell most benignly through many generations, both upon his country and upon his race, I may assert anywhere without the fear of contradiction. It required a heart full of love to God and man, like his, to dictate the high purpose of giving so much of his life to the improvement of the humbler classes; and it required the vast comprehension, the indomitable energy, the untiring perseverance, the seraphic eloquence that he possessed, to contrive and put into operation that system of Christian economics which has already immortalized him as the benefactor of the poor.

It were to be expected, moreover, that a mind like his should

lend itself vigorously and cordially to the cause of religious freedom; and I bless God that he was not suffered to die, till the honor of having achieved a glorious triumph in this cause, was awarded to him. I say not this in the spirit of party crimination, as if there were not in that memorable conflict great and good men who saw with other eyes and acted another part, and yet were honest in doing so. We are not to forget the power of education, the power of habit, over the judgment and even the conscience. Chalmers himself, during the greater part of his life, was a very champion in the cause of ecclesiastical establishments; and I believe he held to the theory, in some form or other, to the last; and we scarcely marvel at it when we remember that he was nursed in the bosom of an establishment; that his earliest religious associations were identified with it; that it opened to him his field of labor, and supplied him, to a great extent, with his means of usefulness. If you reproach him for his adherence to what you consider a false system, you forget that he was a man, or rather you virtually assume to be more than a man yourself. But though he had always defended the union of church and state up to a certain point, believing as he did that this was most conducive to the perpetuation and progress of true religion, yet when he became satisfied that the state was assuming spiritual dominion—was interfering with the liberty wherewith Christ makes his disciples free, he instantly took the attitude of stern resistance. He reasoned, he expostulated, he predicted results, he poured his honest and glowing eloquence into the ear of those who stood nearest the throne; but when all proved unavailing, he bowed to the dictates of sovereign conscience, and went out, weeping and yet rejoicing, the captain of a great host of the Lord's freemen. Oh, that was a day memorable in the annals of religious liberty—a day that will bear witness to all coming generations of the might and the majesty of christian principle; and rely on it, it will be chronicled with the greater glory, because it will associate itself for ever with his venerable name.

If there has been a man of modern times of whom it may be said emphatically that his field was the world, that man is Dr. Chalmers. He wrought with mighty power upon the destinies, not merely of a nation, but of his race. Scotland was indeed his immediate theatre of action; but such is the relation that Scotland, as a fountain of intellectual and moral renovation, bears to the world, that every effort directed especially to her improvement, vibrates in a thousand nameless influences to the ends of the earth. But he acted not only indirectly, but directly upon other countries than his own. Wherever his writings have circulated, (and they are household words where-

ever the English language is spoken) they have a powerful though insensible agency in moulding and elevating human character.

If I were to attempt an estimate of the influence of this wonderful man, as it has been and is hereafter to be exerted upon the world, I should speak first, of what he has done for the cause of a pure Christianity. I should ask you to estimate, if you could, the privilege of being able in a conflict with the enemies of our holy religion, to point to one of such rare endowments and such superlative excellence, and to say that he accounted it his highest glory to be an humble learner in the school of Christ. I should next refer to that noble vindication of the claim of Christianity to a divine origin, in the prosecution of which he first attained to an experience of its life-giving energy, and in the study of which, misgiving and terror, and finally conviction, have not unfrequently overtaken the boldest skepticism. I should speak then of the wonderful charm with which his eloquence hath invested evangelical truth, without diminishing aught of its power; of the just proportions in which he has brought out the various parts of the Christian system, so that each part sustains its legitimate relation to every other, and the whole is rendered the most attractive and the most effective. I should undertake to show that to him more than any other man belongs the honor of having established a goodly fellowship between Science and Christianity; for it was his astronomical discourses that gave the first great impulse on this subject to the popular mind; and that was only the beginning of a bright series of efforts which he directed to the same object. I should dwell, moreover, upon the acknowledged fact that he has set forth the Christian religion, not only as an eminently spiritual and practical, but an eminently intellectual thing; and that those who will have it that its doctrines are the appropriate food of weak minds, may find in every part of his writings a rebuke that should not only awe them into silence, but cover them with confusion.

But it would be an inadequate view of the extent of his influence which should include that only which he has done for the cause of evangelical truth: to do justice to such a theme, it would be necessary to trace out the practical workings of his great mind in the general progress of human society; more particularly to ascertain the results of the plans which he projected, of the agencies which he originated, with a view to the elevation of the lower classes. Especially would it be necessary to illustrate the importance of that last and greatest movement of his life, in its bearings on the universal reign of religious freedom, and the ultimate regeneration of the world. I look over the nations now, and the multitude are subjected to a debasing

and withering thraldom. Even where liberty of conscience is in some sense recognized, they are still almost everywhere trammels which the dignity of the rational man requires should be shaken off. I mark the heavings of human society, in some istances even the tottering of thrones, which proclaim in no equivocal manner that it shall not always be so. Wait till the history of what is now in progress shall be written, and you will find the banners of an unshackled freedom waving over all the nations; and I am no prophet if it does not then appear that Scotland had a mighty agency in this work, and that some of her noblest efforts were put forth in the person of the illustrious man whose virtues we commemorate.

If Chalmers had any contemporary with whom he might be fittingly compared, it was Robert Hall. But while in some respects they were strikingly alike, in others they were no less strikingly dissimilar. Both possessed transcendant intellectual gifts; both were fine examples of simplicity and humility; both were constituted with a glowing and generous enthusiasm; both were the idols of their country, and the admiration of the world. But admitting that they had the same degree of intellectual capacity, Chalmers had the more glowing imagination, Hall the more exquisite taste. Chalmers kept you entranced by the endlessly diversified hues which his mind shed upon a single truth; Hall carried you forward from one field of thought to another, with a graceful facility joined to an irresistible energy, which perhaps scarcely any other man ever possessed. Hall's style may be studied as a model to the end of time; whereas Chalmers' style, radiant though it be with beauty and instinct with power, could never serve as a medium for any other thoughts than his own. Hall's life was a perpetual conflict with bodily pain; Chalmers was blessed with a fine constitution, and rarely suffered from disease. As a consequence of this Hall lived chiefly in his study, and only occasionally looked out upon the world; while Chalmers' was always on the arena of public action, and moved visibly in every great and good project that invoked his aid. They were not only mutual friends, but each was an admirer of the other's genius; each rejoiced in the other's light; and it is a delightful thought that they now have met again at the close of life's wearisome pilgrimage, in a communion of glorious thought and hallowed feeling, which shall be commensurate with their own immortality.

If the extinction of this great light hath caused an unusual gloom to pervade even this distant country, what think you, my friends, of the sorrow which has been diffused through the circles of his more immediate influence; over the country which is honored to call him her son? What say you especially of

the tide of grief that must have set in upon that branch of the church which owes not only its rapid growth but even its distinct existence, in a great measure, to his labors and sacrifices? Nor is this the first time that the Free church has had to go into mourning because one of her pillars had been stricken away. The accomplished Welsh, with whom the hopes of her prosperity were in no small degree associated, was cut off, almost whilst she was breathing her earliest thanksgivings to God for his gracious interpositions. And then there was the illustrious Abercrombie, — the Christian philosopher of the age,—distinguished alike for the greatness of his mind, the purity of his heart, the beneficent activity of his life, and that beautiful modesty that constitutes the finest finish of an exalted character,—he too was taken,—and taken so suddenly that his own children supposed he was yet among them in his accustomed vigor, even after he was in Heaven. Christian brethren, though the ocean separates you from us, and ye hear not these expressions of our condolence, we share in the sorrows of your bereavement; we bespeak for you the presence of the heavenly Comforter. Venerable Scotland, mourning Scotland, we tender you our heartfelt sympathy; we honor your illustrious dead; but because we belong to the world, we claim that your Abercrombie and your Chalmers, like the light of the morning, or any other of Heaven's universal gifts, are ours also.

SERMON CCCCLVIII.

BY REV. EDWIN F. HATFIELD,

PASTOR OF THE SEVENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK.

THE SPIRIT AND LIFE OF THE MINISTRY.

An Address delivered before the graduating Class of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, June 29th, 1847, in behalf of the Board of Directors.

To raise up, by the blessing of God, a ministry distinguished for learning, energy, and entire consecration to the service of the Redeemer in winning souls, the founders of this Institution cheerfully devoted their time, their thoughts, and their property. The wants of a perishing world affected their hearts, and they resolved to arise and build. They saw the harvest perishing for lack of laborers, or by reason of the lamentable inefficiency of those who had been employed to reap it. And they resolved to make an effort to furnish to the world such a ministry as the world needs.

Our solicitude, dear brethren, in respect to yourselves, ceases not with the dissolution of your immediate connexion with the Seminary. We shall follow you wherever you go, and shall never cease to feel a lively interest in all your future history. If it may please the Great Head of the Church to count you faithful and put you into the ministry, we expect you to make full proof of the ministry.

It forms no part of our intention, on this occasion, to instruct you in the several, or in any of the details of the work of interpreting the sacred oracles, of the composition and delivery of sermons, or of the application of the lessons of ecclesiastical history to the circumstances of the present age. To these details you have long been devoted, under the guidance of skilful instructors. We have the utmost confidence, both in the diligence and ability with which you have been taught, and in your manifested readiness to receive instruction.

We desire, rather, in these few parting words, to speak of the *spirit and life* of the ministry which you hope so shortly to enter—of that which will best enable you to accomplish the great object for which the ministry is instituted—the salvation of perishing souls.

You cannot, dear brethren, but be aware of the solemn fact, that the efficiency of the ministry is, and has for a long time been, far less than in the days of James and John, Paul and Barnabas. With all the fruits of our blessed revivals of religion, we are bringing but little to pass. The number of conversions bears but a small proportion to the number who are pledged to the work of seeking out and saving the lost. The annual average of additions to our churches scarcely supplies the desolations of death. We are making but little impression on the great mass of wickedness and corruption with which the world is filled. In our own city, how seldom do we hear of large in-gatherings from the world, and of numerous seals to our ministry! At this rate how indefinitely protracted must be the process of converting the world to Christ! Surely the heart must become sick when hope is so much deferred.

As, therefore, we think of sending forth five-and-thirty new laborers into the harvest-field, we are ready to ask—What will be the character of your labors, and what the results of your ministry? Are we to believe that you are all actuated by a fervent and single desire to win souls to Christ, and determined, by God's grace, to lay yourselves out, for the remaining term of your lives, to secure this one object, so infinitely desirable? Or have you some other purpose at heart?—some other line of conduct in view?

In order, brethren, that you may fulfill the just expectations of your instructors and benefactors; in order that you may accomplish the one great design of your calling; in order that you may

be wise to win souls, not a few—you must not only be furnished with all the stores of sacred science, but with a living, energetic faith in God; not only with the ordinary gifts and graces of a soul renewed, but with large and frequent communications of special grace. Your piety must be neither doubtful, nor ordinary. It must be of a high order. It must be above suspicion, as well as reproach. You must be as distinguished for piety as for sacred learning. Yours must be, not a flickering light, but a living flame, that knows nothing of decay, burning on through all changes, and burning ever. You are to be self-crucified; to die daily; to have your life hid with Christ in God. Whatever others can venture to do in the pursuit of earthly gain or fame, you can have nothing to do with such objects. You must be crucified to the world and the world to you. Christ must be your only portion; his service your only work; his approbation the only reward that you seek. Whoever else can rest satisfied with present attainments in religious experience, you must, at no time, count yourselves to have apprehended; but this one thing you are to do—forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, you are to press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

In a word, whatever else you neglect, you are never to neglect *the culture of your own heart.* On this point, dear brethren, we cannot be too earnest, too importunate with you. The success of your endeavors is too intimately connected with eminent holiness, for us to regard it as a small matter. We know that we shall utterly fail of our design in this sacred charity, if we fail here. We urge it upon you, therefore, with all our might, as the one great object of desire and need on the part of the church—as that in which there is, and is apt to be, a most lamentable deficiency.

How else, my brethren, can you be fitted for your work? What, but a deep heart-felt experience of divine love can sustain you, under the numerous and complicated trials of the ministry? Many of you are to become, erelong, spiritual overseers of the people of God. You are to succeed to the places, duties and responsibilities of learned, venerable and holy men of God, who, after having served their own generation, by the will of God, have fallen asleep, or have retired from the active services of their vocation. You will find in these churches not a few survivors of that generation, who were trained under such a ministry to fight the battles of the Lord. Fathers in Israel and mothers in Israel you will find, who were in Christ before you were born; and have been learners in the school of Christ, some of them scores of years. Such as these are to come and sit at your feet, to be taught the will and the ways of God; to be enriched with heavenly treasure, to be filled with celestial

food. How can you hope to feed these aged sheep, unless you have yourselves drunk deep of the well-spring of salvation? Your elegant dissertations, your learned expositions, your acute reasonings, your splendid exhibitions of scholastic science, or of forensic eloquence, will but disgust and starve them, unless you discourse to them, in strains that flow from a full fountain within, of "*the Life of God in the Soul of man*,"—unless they find that you are wont to draw your inspirations, not from Helicon, but from "Siloa's fount, that flows fast by the oracles of God"—unless they are constrained to confess, that you speak, not only what you have seen and heard, but what you have felt, in all its fulness, again and again.

Such an aged disciple once remarked to him who now addresses you, at a time when he was yet in his novitiate, in respect to the students of one of our most valued and venerated schools of the prophets,—"They have learning, it is true, and can write and reason well; but they are unfit to preach until they have passed through, and have labored as ministers in, a powerful revival of religion. They lack that kind of experience, which can only be gained by the closest and most intimate acquaintance with the operations of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of the heart." Nothing, brethren, but the most ardent piety, and unaffected spirituality of soul, can fit you to preach to this class of God's dear children, whose profiting so shames us, their unworthy teachers and pastors.

But such are not all. Alas! you will find many, very many, in the bosom of the church, who tread the narrow path, if at all, with slow and uncertain steps. The standard of holiness in our churches is lamentably low. Too many of those who profess to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, are intent upon the wealth and honors of the world. Earthly things, and not heavenly, engross their thoughts, and engage their hearts. To the incomparable charms of genuine godliness, they are almost, if not wholly blind. They are anxious more for larger measures of worldly good, than for greater degrees of divine grace. Scarcely in this bustling, covetous age, can they be induced to recognize the paramount claims of the Lord Jesus to all their possessions—to all their energies—to all their heart. They have no sympathy, or almost none, with the Son of God, in his purposes, plans, and sufferings, for the conversion of a lost world. Scarcely can they be brought to feel a proper concern for the eternal welfare of their own flesh and blood, while they are all eagerness to secure for them an earthly inheritance—the fleeting bubbles of an hour. Who, that loves his Saviour and the souls of men, has not mourned over the low state, and the low standard of religion in the churches? This it is, that grieves away the Holy Spirit, that deprives us of his converting influences,

and makes the ways of Zion to mourn. This it is that paralyzes every department of Christian benevolence, dries up the streams that should enrich a barren world, and makes religion a reproach among men.

Such the church must cease to be. She must arise and shine, radiant with the beams of holiness, with the glory of her God upon her. You, dear brethren, are to have a part in this work of restoration and renovation, But, for this peculiar work, you need what none of you have yet too fully experienced. You need to be baptized with the baptism that Christ, your Master, was baptized with;—to drink of the cup of which he himself so freely drank. You have surely as much need, as had the eleven, to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high. If you would lift up the fallen, you must yourselves be firm. If you would elevate the standard of holiness, you must yourselves have advanced beyond your brethren in truth and grace. It is not argument, nor entreaty, nor admonition, that will secure this end. All these have been tried in vain. You must get you up into Horeb, and there commune with the God of Israel, until your very faces shine with holy radiance, as did the face of Moses. You must dwell in the heavenly mount, until you become so absorbed with the divine glory, as to become insensible to human applause, and earthly honor. When they, to whom you are sent with God's message, shall be constrained to exclaim of you, "Truly, this is a man of God!" then they will hear; then your words will penetrate their hearts; then your profiting will appear in the profiting of them that hear you. If you would have your people humble, holy, active, laborious and self-denying, such you must yourselves be. You must be laden with the spices of the heavenly Canaan, if you would be a savor of life unto life —a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish. You must be an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity—in all things showing yourselves patterns of good works.

Not alone on these accounts do you need the possession of eminent piety. To you is to be entrusted, dear brethren, the mighty work of reclaiming the lost, the perishing. Alas! what multitudes are there, everywhere, at home as well as abroad, who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, having no hope, and without God in the world! And how shall they be incorporated into the church of God? By what agency shall they cease to be strangers and foreigners, and become fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God? What kind of preaching, you yourselves are ready to ask, is needed in order to reach their consciences, and break their stubborn wills? When you hear of a minister of Christ, who has been eminent-

ly prospered in the peculiar vocation of winning souls, you are anxious to know what is the secret of his preaching. Would that we were better fitted to gratify your reasonable curiosity! So far as we have been able to learn we have become convinced, that but little good is to be expected from the best of sermons, unless he who preaches is deeply in earnest; or at least seems so to be. It is, when our whole souls are glowing with heavenly truth, our whole hearts burning with love to God, and bursting with desire for the present salvation of souls for whom the Lord of glory bled and died—it is, when the one cry of the burdened soul to God, as the knee is bent in the closet, and as we rise to preach the everlasting gospel, is—"Give me souls, O Lord, or I die!"—when we cannot endure that a single soul who hears us should ever perish, and we pour forth the fresh and ardent yearning of our hearts in words that breathe with present life, and thoughts that burn as coals from a living altar—it is, when thus we preach, that our hearers are not only convinced that God is in us of a truth, but are brought to feel that they cannot live without his light and love. Then it is, that the sword of the Spirit reaches the heart, and the sinner cries out in the anguish of death—"Carry me out of the host, for I am slain!" Then it is, that the dead awake, arise, and sing the praises of redeeming love.

Such is the preaching that we need. Such we must have, or we can never affect the mass of wickedness without—never accomplish the great work that is given us to do. But, in order thus to preach, we must dwell on Golgotha—we must watch with Christ in Gethsemame. We must live where we can see, on the one hand, the flames of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, and hear, on the other, the songs that burst from the unnumbered millions around the great white throne. We must live on the very confines of eternity, in close communion with the spirit-world, and with the Father of spirits himself. We must have such fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, as shall constrain the world to take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and learned of him.

These views, we have reason to believe, you, beloved, have already imbibed. We rejoice to know, that since you have dwelt within our sacred halls, you have not been indifferent to the cultivation of your own hearts. We have watched, with no little joy and gratitude, the developments of your faith, your lowliness, your zeal, your self-denial, your ardent love. We have given glory to God as we have seen more than a fourth of your number devoting yourselves to the arduous work of planting the standard of the cross on heathen shores. It has been told us, how earnestly you have sought to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which

is your reasonable service; how ardently desirous and covetous you have been of the spirit of entire consecration to your Redeemer. For the attainment of this grace, you have enjoyed peculiar advantages. Your associations have been such as to furnish you with most powerful incentives to a holy life.

But now, dear brethren, a voice from the throne summons you from the sacred cloisters, where you have so long dwelt in communion with the holy, to the rugged walks of usefulness, and the rough fields of ministerial labor. The means of grace which you have so long and so profitably enjoyed, you are to possess no more. New and untried scenes are before you. Other and far different are to be your daily pursuits and associations. Until now, you have been under tutors and governors; you are henceforth to be yourselves tutors and spiritual governors of God's people. Heretofore you have been placed under pastoral oversight, and have been the objects of a pastor's culture and prayers. You are soon yourselves to be pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and guides of immortal souls. Thus far, as undistinguished laymen, entrusted with no peculiar charge, you have, in common with all your brethren, been called to work out your own salvation—to watch over and keep with all diligence your own heart. Henceforth it is to be the one great business of your life, to work out the salvation, not of your own soul alone, but of all to whom you may be sent with the messages of life—to save both yourselves and those that hear you. You are to kindle and cherish the sacred fire of holy love on the altar not of your own heart merely, but of all over whom you may be placed in the Lord. You are seldom to sit under the droppings of the sanctuary, and to receive from godly counsellors impulses of holy love; but you are yourselves to give tone to the piety of whole churches and communities of worshippers.

You can no more sit together in heavenly places as you have delighted to sit, but must seek out other and separate abodes. You can no more be what you have been. This day closes, in a sense deeply affecting, the period of your novitiate. From this hour, you enter upon new scenes, new duties, new trials; you assume new connexions, new engagements, new responsibilities.

In order, therefore, to the culture of your own heart, in the midst of all these cares and labors for others, in order to the keeping of your own vineyard, you will need to be doubly diligent and watchful. The proportion of time hitherto devoted to yourselves, it will not be in your power hereafter to appropriate. You will be in great danger of neglecting your own souls, and of losing that fervor which prompted you to seek an entrance into the holy ministry. Called out, as you will be, so frequently, to be a spectacle unto the world, to be gazed at, and spoken of, you

will be exposed to a class of temptations, of which as yet you have known but little. New allurements will assail you—new enemies seek your downfall. The ardor of your devotions will be nearly quenched with the waters of strife, and the smooth surface of your love be ruffled and tossed with the vanities of the world. Such has been our experience, and will be yours. You cannot, then, give too much heed to our earnest entreaties. You cannot be too earnest yourselves in cultivating your own hearts, in seeking the utmost holiness of heart and purity of life.

In this impressive hour, we can speak of nothing else. We charge you, dear brethren, to give yourselves up from this hour to be wholly the Lord's. Let this, the last day of your union on earth, bear witness, that henceforth you are to be more than ever united to the Lord of your hearts.

You stand here together, for the last time. You part this evening, to meet no more on earth—no more until the last trump shall wake the dead. One of your number is already far advanced, in the floating *Catalpa*, on his way to the land of the ancient Medes and Persians. Others will soon, in like manner, be speeding their way across the ocean, to bear the gospel far hence to the Gentiles. While not a few, we trust, will be directing their steps to the land of the setting sun, to seek out the scattered sheep of the house of Israel, and to build up the waste places of our own land.

The moment of your separation draws nigh. You go, not like the eight-and-thirty, who have just left the Military School on the other bank of the noble Hudson, to carry arrows, firebrands and death into the midst of a peaceful and unoffending community, but to rescue them that are ready to perish ;—not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. When next you meet, may you have to tell of bloodless battles, peaceful conquests, and crowns of life. And as you then gather together around the throne, may a great multitude from the East and the West, from the North and the South, rise up and call you "the blessed of the Lord."

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SERMON CCCCLIX.

BY REV. HORACE BUSHNELL, D. D.
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BARBARISM THE FIRST DANGER.*

Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing that I have a Levite to my priest.—Judges 17 : 13.

A very unimportant chapter of biography is here preserved to us—save that if we take the subject as an exponent of his times, we shall find a serious and momentous truth illustrated in his conduct. He lives in the time of the Judges, that is, in the emigrant age of Israel. It is the time when his nation are passing through the struggles incident to a new settlement, a time, therefore, of decline towards barbarism. Public security is gone. The people have run wild. Superstition has dislodged the clear sovereignty of reason. Forms are more sacred than duties, and a costly church furniture is taken as synonymous with a godly life. It is at just such times that we are to look for the union of great crimes and scrupulous acts of devotion. The villain and the saint coalesce, without difficulty, in one and the same character; and superstition, which delights in absurdities, hides the imposture from him who suffers it. Thus Micah enters on the stage of history as a thief, having stolen eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother; but before the scene closes he becomes, at least in his own view, quite a saint; and that too, if we may judge, without any great detriment to his former character.

*The following discourse was prepared on behalf of the American Home Missionary Society, and delivered in New York, Boston, and other places, in May and June, 1847.

Finding that his mother has invoked a solemn curse upon the thief, whoever he may be, that has stolen her money; and also, which is more frightful still, that she had actually dedicated the money, before it was stolen, to a religious use, even to make a molten image for himself, the superstitious fancy of the barbarian begins to worry his peace. To have stolen the money was nothing specially dreadful, but to have a parent's curse hanging over his head, and sacred money hid in his house—both considered to involve the certainty of some impending mischief that is fatal—is more than he has courage to support. Moved of course, by no ingenuous and dignified spirit of repentance, but only by a drivelling superstition, he goes to his mother and chokes out his confession, saying: "The silver is with me, I took it!" And what a beautiful evidence of piety, thinks the glad mother, that her Micah was afraid to keep the sacred money! So she pours out her dear blessing upon him: "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son!" Then she takes the silver and from it has a molten image cast for her worthy and hopeful son, which he sets up in "the house of his gods," among the teraphim and other trumpery there collected. And as Micah is now growing religious, he must also have a priest. First he consecrates his own son; but his son not being a Levite, it was difficult for so pious a man to be satisfied. Fortunately, a young Levite—a strolling mendicant, probably—comes that way, and he promptly engages the youth to remain and act the *padre* for him, saying: "Dwell with me and be a *father* unto me." Having thus got up a religion, the thief is content and his mental troubles are quieted. Becoming a Romanist before Rome is founded, he says: "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." That it would do him any good to be a better man, does not appear to have occurred to him. Religion, to him, consisted rather in a fine silver apparatus of gods, and a priest in regular succession!

Set now the picture in its frame, the man in connection with his times, and you have in exhibition a great practical truth which demands your earnest study. Nothing is more certain, as you may see in this example of Micah and his times, than that *emigration, or a new settlement of the social state, involves a tendency to social decline.* There must, in every such case, be a relapse towards barbarism, more or less protracted, more or less complete. Commonly, nothing but extraordinary efforts in behalf of education and religion, will suffice to prevent a fatal lapse of social order. Apart from this great truth clearly seen and enveloped in the practical struggles of our American history, no one can understand its real import, the problem it involves or the position at which we have now arrived. Least of all can he understand the sublime relation of home missions, and other like enterprises, to the unknown future of our great nation. He must know that we are a people trying out the per-

ils incident to a new settlement of the social state; he must behold religion passing out into the wilds of nature with us, to fortify law, industry and good manners, and bear up our otherwise declining fortunes, till we become an established and fully cultivated people. Just here hang all the struggles of our history for the two centuries now passed, and for at least another century yet to come.

We shall also discover, in pursuing our subject, in what manner we are to apprehend danger from the spread of Romanism. If you seem to struggle, in this matter of Romanism, with contrary convictions; to see reason in the alarms urged upon you so frequently, and yet feel it to be the greatest unreason to fear the prevalence here of a religion so distinctively opposite to our character and institutions; if you waver between a feeling of panic and a feeling of derision; if you are half frightened by the cry of Romanism, and half scorn it as a bugbear; you will be able to settle yourself into a sober and fixed opinion of the subject, when you perceive that we are in danger, first, of something far worse than Romanism, and through that of Romanism itself. OUR FIRST DANGER IS BARBARISM—Romanism next; for before we can think it a religion to have a Levite to our priest, we must bring back the times of the Judges. Let us empty ourselves of our character, let us fall into superstition through the ignorance, wildness, and social confusion incident to a migratory habit and a rapid succession of new settlements, and Romanism will find us just where character leaves us. The real danger is the prior. Taking care of that we are safe. Sleeping over that, nothing ought to save us; for if we must have a wild race of nomads roaming on the vast western territories of our land—a race without education, law, manners or religion—we need not trouble ourselves further on account of Romanism, for to such a people, Romanism, bad as it is will come as a blessing.

I shall recur to this question of Romanism again. I only name it here as a preliminary, that it may assist you to apprehend the true import of my subject. Let us now proceed to the question itself, how far emigration and a continual resettlement, as in this country, involve a tendency to moral and social disorganization? In the discussion of this question, I shall draw principally on the facts of history; I only suggest here, as a preparative and key to the facts that may be cited, a few of the reasons why such a decline is likely to appear.

First of all, the society transplanted, in a case of emigration, cannot carry its roots with it; for society is a vital creature, having roots of antiquity, which inhere in the very soil—in the spots consecrated by valor, by genius, and by religion. Transplanted to a new field, the emigrant race lose, of necessity, a considerable portion of that vital force which is the organific and conserving power of society. All the old roots of local

love and historic feeling—the joints and bands that minister nourishment—are left behind; and nothing remains to organize a living growth, but the two unimportant incidents, proximity and a common interest.

Education must, for a long time, be imperfect in degree and partial in extent. There is no literary atmosphere breathing through the forests or across the prairies. The colleges, if any they have, are only rudimental beginnings, and the youth a raw company of woodsmen, Hurried into life, at the bar or in the pulpit, when as yet they are only half educated, their performances are crude in the matter and rough in the form. No matter how cultivated the professional men of the first age, those of the second, third and fourth will mix up extravagance and cant in all their demonstrations, and will be acceptable to the people partly for that reason. For the immense labors and rough hardships necessary to be encountered, in the way of providing the means of living, will ordinarily create in them a rough and partially wild habit.

Then, as their tastes grow wild, their resentments will grow violent and their enjoyments coarse. The salutary restraints of society being, to a great extent, removed, they will think it no degradation to do before the woods and wild animals, what, in the presence of a cultivated social state, they would blush to perpetrate. They are likely even to look upon the indulgence of low vices and brutal pleasures, as the necessary garnish of their life of adventure.

In religion, their views will, of course, be narrow and crude, and their animosities bitter. Sometimes the very life of religion will seem about to die, as it actually would, save that some occasional outburst of over-wrought feeling or fanatical zeal kindles a temporary fire. Probably it will be found that low superstitions begin to creep in, a regarding of dreams, a faith in the presentations of Scripture text, in apparitions and visions perhaps also, in necromancy.

Meantime, if we speak of civil order, it will probably be found that the old common law of the race is not transplanted as a vital power, but only as a recollection that refuses to live because of the newness of the soil, and the varied circumstances which, in so many ways, render it inapplicable. It asks for loyalty where there is no demesne, offers a jury before there is a court, and sanctifies a *magna charta* where no plain of Runnymede is ever to be known. Hence the need of much new legislation, consequently much of confusion and a considerable lapse of time, before the new body of law, with its tribunals and uses, can erect its trunk and grow up into life from a native root. Meantime it is well, if the social wildness and the violent resentments of the people do not break over all the barriers of legal restraint, and dissolve the very bonds of order

If now, besides all the causes here enumerated, the emigrant

are much involved in war to maintain their possessions, or if they are gathered from many nations having different languages, laws, manners, and religions, the tendency to social decline is, of course, greatly aggravated. Indeed, where all the forms of habit, prejudice and opinion are found to impinge upon each other, and every recollection of the past, every peculiar trait of national feeling and personal character requires to be oblitterated, before it is possible for the new elements to coalesce what can save a people, we are tempted to ask, from being, precipitated downward even below society itself?

Having glanced, in this rapid manner, at the causes of decline theoretically involved in emigration (for emigration works no mischief by itself, but only as it provokes the mailignant action of other causes,) let us now pass to some historic illustrations. And I begin with the emigration headed by Abraham, where the facts are already familiar, so that when you are engaged in tracing their import as illustrations of my subject, your minds will be distracted by no effort of attention to conceive the facts themselves.

There was never an emigration conducted under better auspices. As in the original settlement of New England, the aim and purpose of the movement were strictly religious, the emigrants, too were shepherds in their habit, never attached to the soil but accustomed to movement. They came out also as a family, for Lot appears to have been only a ward of Abraham; and in the family state, which is itself a patriarchate, the simplest and most unquestionable of all governments, as it is closest to nature, they had a complete frame of social order already provided. Though trained as a nomad and manifesily ignorant of certain moral distinctions familiar to us, Abraham yet evinces in his character, a degree of beauty and princely dignity, such as seldom can be found under the politer forms of civilization. In his heroic pursuit and slaughter of the kings to rescue Lot, in the singular dignity of his meeting with Melchisedec on his return, in the generous and conciliatory terms by which he sought to avoid the quarrel already begun between Lot's herdsmen and his own, in his hospitality at the tent door in Mamre, in his burial of Sarah, in the whole manner of his life, in short, there is a grand, massive nobility ot character, which, if we cannot call it civilization or refinement, is yet only so much higher and more charming, as it is closer to nature, more original and older than the days of accomplished heartlessness and drawing-room pretence. It is the pure, virgin character of a great and primitive manhood, which, in the simple, godly life of the east country, was not yet spent.

See now what a mass of barbarism is shortly developed out of this fair beginning. The character of Lot is not strongly fortified by religious principle, and the restraints of society being now removed he soon falls into loose habits of virtue, and

in the end brings himself and his family to a very sorry figure. Thus out of Lot springs the wild race of the Moabites; a race as degraded in character as the abominable and filthy rites of their god Baal Peor requires them to be, enemies, of course, to Jehovah and the kindred stock of Israel, in all after times. The Ammonites are a branch of the same stock.

Meantime, Abraham himself is throwing off upon the world, in his son Ishmael, another stock of barbarians. Driven out with his mother; to seek his fortune as he may, among the wild tribes of idolators that infest the country, the lad, we are told, grows up in the wilderness and becomes an archer. By which it appears that he betook himself to some secret cave or fastness, in the south, and there, by the use of his bow as a hunter and robber, maintained himself and became the father of the Bedouin race. There he trained up the young Ishmaelites, otherwise called Arabs—a name which, according to some, signifies *westerners*—a prolific, talented and powerful race of men, whose nature it has been to this hour to live by plunder, whose hand is against every man and every man's hand against them. Thus you have another wild people, a cruel, treacherous, lying stock of thieves and adolators developed out of the emigration.

One generation later, viz., out of the family of Isaac, comes another. I speak of the persecuted Esau and the Idumeans or Edomites descended of him. These were a warlike and ferocious race, governed by dukes or great captains, and for long ages the sturdiest of all the enemies of Israel.

It is remarkable too, that when David is giving the roll in one of his psalms, of the great league of nations that were conspiring, at that time, against his country, he puts at the head of all precisely these three fierce and barbarous people, descended of Terah, the common ancestor both of them and of his countrymen. "For they have consulted together with one consent, they are confederate against thee, the tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagarenes." The follow the other nations who are led by these.

Meantime, if we consider the dastardly conduct of the t- brothers of Joseph, who for jealousy sell him into slavery, a then, by a solemn lie, convince their father that he is dead, membering also and holding in comparison, Abraham's no and magnanimous treatment of Lot, we shall see that there h certainly been a very great falling off towards barbarism, the chosen family itself.

But we must follow them further, even into this book Judges, where they come to make their final settlement in t land. In Egypt they had become acquainted with agricultu with cities and the settled modes of life; though degraded, some extent, by their temporary subjection to slavery. B their freedom, connected with their strong legal discipline u der Moses, the new sentiments and new social capacities, whi

had been formed under this protracted discipline of forty years, during which the old generation of slavery had become extinct, had prepared them to enter the country appointed and make a fair beginning. They took their places; for a time all was well. Still they were a people without roots, and they began, ere long, to fall into social anarchy. They served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that had overlived Joshua and had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel, and when that generation were gathered unto their fathers—so says the history "There arose another generation, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." Now came the dark time; for in every emigration, the moral and social trial commonly falls, not on the first generation, but more frequently on the second, third and fourth. So it was here and it really seemed that the nation must utterly die, before it could get root. Three times it is said in the history that "there was no king in Israel, and that every man did what was right, in his own eyes." By which we are to understand, not that royalty was discontinued, for it had not existed; but that there was no civil head, that government was utterly dissolved. It was, in truth, the paradisaic age of no government; a day when they had it, not for a theory, but for a fact. Wrongs were redressed by uprisings of popular impatience, by assassination or private revenge. In one case of outrage, which may be taken doubtless as a good specimen of the barbarity of the times, the tribes were roused to vengeance, in the manner of a riot, by sending round as a proclamation, the pieces of a murdered woman's body! If at any time they had a government, it was commonly the government of a usurper, who butchered, as he came into power, after the method of the Turks, all the families that had any semblance of right to civil precedence, or any possible hope of succession. The roads were destroyed, and there was no passage through the country, save in by-ways, or across the fields and mountains. The arts perished; there was not even a smith left in the land, and they were obliged to go down to the Philistines to get an axe or a mattock sharpened. In one case, they fought a battle with ox goads, because they had no better implements. Their religion being all one with the laws, fell of course into the same confusion with them. As we see in the case of Micah, Jehovah, and the gods, all stand upon a par! They have their molten images set up together in "the house of the gods," to be smoked by the same incense; and Micah's Levite probably has it for his duty to practise before them all! Such is the decline suffered by this emigrant nation, in the process of colonizing a new region and building up a new social fabric. But dismal as the picture is to which they have descended, we have it for our comfort, that they are not utterly lost. After they have sounded the lowest notes of misery and

social debasement, a S muel appears, collects the scattered elements, works them gr dually towards order, and the new nation, taking root, begins to rise.

Passing over now the instructive lessons that might be drawn from the Egyptian, Grecian, Carthaginian, and Roman colonies, we descend to the great American question itself. That the Mexican and the South American States have actually lost ground, since the emigration; that they have been descending steadily towards barbarism, in the loss of the old Castilian dignity, in the decay of society and manners, and the general prostration of order, is well understood. But it it is commonly supposed, I believe, that our North American settlements, especially those of New England, have never suffered any similar retrogradation; that they have, on the contrary, steadily advanced or ascended to their present state. No impression could be more opposite to the real facts of history. Probably never before did any emigrant people resist, with so great promptitude and effect, the inherent causes of decline involved in a new state of society. Nor can it be said that the issue was ever doubtful. Indeed I am not sure that, if we consider the rough amount of character in the whole community, any real diminution was ever suffered. For if much was lost in the complete finish of the higher class, something was also gained in the sharpness, vigor, and capacity of the lower. And if there was even a decay of virtue and good manners in all classes, there was yet a gain in all, as regards spirit, self-reliance, physical endurance, and other like traits, which are essential as the staple of a perfect manhood. If there was more coarseness, so possibly there was more volume. If there was less of learning, there was also a more perfect deliverance from the restraints of learning. If they had less of society, they had as much more of action. If they finished nothing, they created more. But in taking such a view as this, which is the most favorable permitted us, it is implied, as will be observed by all, that there was, in certain very important respects, a marked decline.

This decline was most evident in the higher class, and in the cultivated manners and tastes brought over by the emigrant families. The leading spirits of the first age were truly great and cultivated men—cedars of Lebanon, nay, the topmost branches of the cedars, that God had brought over to plant by the waters of the new world. They were many of them scholars, who had received at the English universities, the highest advantages of culture furnished in that age. Their minds were matured and polished by severe study. They knew society. Some of them were persons who had travelled in foreign countries, who had figured in civil stations, and were not unskilled even as courtiers. They were fellow disciples and compatriots with such men as Owen, Howe, Milton, John Hampden, Oliver Cromwell, and the other great

spirits, who were struggling in that age for the civil and religious emancipation of their country. But they came into the wilderness, as it were to be tempted of the devil, throwing themselves and their families, for a whole century to come, upon the severest struggles of toil and warfare, to provide and fortify their new home. For a long time they had no market. In their modes of dress, their residences and their furniture, they were many of them restricted to supplies that were coarse and rude. Their means of education for the youth were defective, in that which is necessary to a finished and really accomplished character, though sufficient to give a good degree of rudimental force. And, more than all, society, that indefinable but powerful something which gives a tone of refinement to literary tastes, and without which feeling cannot rise to its highest dignity—this was a want which no industry or care could supply. The trials and exposures were rough, the great world was far away, petty strifes and bickerings—always enveloped in the ill-nature of the race, but restrained among a great people under the established forms of cultivated life—broke out and raged in their little communities. A painful subsidence of manners soon began to appear. In many families, a certain flavor of refinement passed, by tradition, and in fact was never wholly spent. Still it was evident, after the first race was gone, and the second and third had come into their places, that character had fallen to a lower type. The educated men were, in comparison, a rude, or, at least, partially cultivated race. Their English style is loose. Elegance, well chastened thought, dignity of feeling, do not appear. The spelling is even more irregular and capricious than it had been. And the public proceedings of courts and churches, if the records are referred to, exhibit a certain rawness that is quite characteristic. We feel, in short, that we have descended to an inferior race. It is somewhat as if a nest of eagles had been filled with a brood of owls.

The decline of manners and mental cultivation, consequent on a life in the woods, carried with it a correspondent decline of morals and religion. And the natural downward tendency was aggravated by the wars in which they were compelled to engage. Thus, after the bloody war with Philip, the synod of Massachusetts, convened to deliberate on the state of virtue and religion, set forth the following mournful particulars: "a decay of godliness and secret apostasy among professors;" "pride and contention;" a "want of truth and promise breaking;" a "neglect of family prayer;" "profane swearing;" "intemperance;" "a common practice of travelling on the Sabbath day;" "inordinate passions, and breaches of the seventh commandment." Allowing all that may be necessary for exaggeration in this picture, we are still obliged, when they speak of a *common practice* of travelling on the Sabbath day, to acknowl-

edge that there must have been a very marked decline in their moral habits. Following too into the war the four companies, for example, of Connecticut Rangers, we find them quite at home in the woods, displaying, in their modes of warfare and their wild, rough spirit, the full grown Texan habit. On going to the church and court records of this period and onward, for the next fifty or seventy years, we discover mournful evidences of incontinence, even in the respectable families. As if, being cut off from the more refined pleasures of society, their baser passions had burnt away the restraints of delicacy, and the growing coarseness of manners had allowed them finally to seek in these baser passions, the spring of their enjoyments. Shortly after this war, the wretched scenes of infatuation enacted at Salem, furnish us the proof that religion is dwindling towards superstition. Not that a belief in witchcraft was peculiar to New England, or to that age of the world, but only that a want of thorough mental discipline in the ministry and the courts, connected with a general taint of superstition contracted in the woods by the whole people, aggravated the public delusion and finally suffered the whole body of society to go mad, in scenes which it is even horrible to contemplate.

Still the way is downward till we come to the "great revival," so called, and the times of the French wars. And here we find a period of thirty or forty years, where the dregs of decline and the seeds of new life are so intermixed, and the signs so crossed one by another, that we hardly know what judgment to hold. Over and above all patriotic motives that may be conceived there was a readiness to enlist in these wars, that indicates an adventurous and partially wild habit. The little State of Connecticut, containing at that time probably about 75,000 people, raised and equipped over 5,000 men, for three years in succession. As might be expected, when these two wars were over, the people were found to be reduced to a miserable state of poverty, and, what was yet worse, it was also discovered that their habits of industry and virtuous thrift had received a fatal shock. Then it was, that the people of New England seemed for once to want a spur to their creative activity, and a society was organized "For the Promotion of Industry"—a society which brought out three hundred women with their spinning wheels on Boston Common, to give an example to the other sex, of a virtue which they had so nearly forgotten. Meantime, the whole community, I may almost say, was unconsciously steeping itself in drink; and this also conspired, with the wars, to break down the thrift of the people. In Massachusetts alone; when she had only 150,000 people, fifteen thousand hogsheads of rum were distilled every year, and a very large share of it was consumed by her own citizens; a fact in which you will see—what the living men of that day did not—a certain doom of decline towards social misery and brutality.

At the same time, when it even seems, in our view, that all the foundations are dissolved, and that every hope of a new American civilization has perished, there begin to rise symptoms of order, and possibly of a new era. If the masses have been unsettled, they have also been made conscious of power. Or if they have been corrupted, in the same wars which have robbed them of their virtuous habits, certain great men, afterwards to be distinguished as leaders in our history, have also had their apprenticeship—learned to be leaders, felt the elevation of power, received new impulses, prepared themselves to act with address and vigor in scenes of yet higher moment. Religion, too, has been reviving, and re-asserting its power, not of course in demonstrations the most unexceptionable or respectable, but in such as the times of the Judges will suffer. It is the wild chant of Deborah; or better still, it is the nail that was driven by Jael's hammer—not the ointment ministered by the graceful hand of Mary. This new quickening accomplished, in fact, for religion, what the French wars accomplished for liberty; it broke up the age of frost, and brought in a new era of power. We begin, therefore, shortly to discover that a new spring has been given to character. An upward motion is visible, which upward motion has continued even to the present time, save as the war of the Revolution produced a temporary decline.

Pardon me now, if I venture to fill out the view of my subject, by saying that New England society is still in the transition state. Compared with some portions of the old world, and in certain points of view, we are still in the rough—presenting to the eye a healthy living aspect, such as the old world cannot anywhere offer, but still a raw, unfinished aspect, which it remains for the next century to civilize and bring into full ornamental perfection. For as our our history now begins to live on its own root, and to send up a vitalizing power into the social body; as wealth is unfolded; as schools and colleges are perfecting their standards of learning; as literature and art advance to maturity; we are rising steadily into noon, as a people socially complete.

But the great problem of American society is not solved, however much it may be illustrated, by the history of New England. Still we are rolling on from east to west, plunging into the wilderness, scouring across the great inland deserts and mountains, to plant our habitations on the western ocean. Here again the natural tendencies of emigration towards barbarism, or social decline, are displayed, in signs that cannot be mistaken. The struggle through which we have passed, is continually repeating itself, under new modifications. We see the same experiment involving similar jeopardies; and we may draw out of our experiences warnings to make us anxious, and encouragements

to make us hopeful for our country—a double argument of fear and hope, to make us doubly faithful in our Christian efforts for its welfare.

In some respects this westward emigration is secured by advantages which our own colonial emigration had not; in others, it is beset by disadvantages quite as decided. Among the advantages are these—First, a better and more available market for the sale of its products, and hence, a much greater facility in rising to a state of outward comfort. Secondly, a good and well established government, able to protect the beginnings made, exerting also an important moral constraint over all tendencies to lawlessness and public disorder. Thirdly, a connexion with the eastern and older portions of the country, by which they are made to feel the moral effect of association with a more advanced state of manners, of social culture and religious virtue. Fourthly, a history; for it is not as when our fathers forsook a history to plant themselves in this new world; but the emigrant, wherever he strays, remembers that he is an American still. He looks out from his hut of logs on the western border, and feels the warmth of a distinct nationality glowing round him, like the clear warmth of day itself. On the other hand, these manifest advantages are counterbalanced by disadvantages. First, the western emigration is not religious, but is instigated by mere personal interest and adventure. Secondly, it does not carry with it a homogeneous or a well educated people. Together with a portion of enterprising, well qualified young men, who are rushing westward after their fortune, it gathers in the rude-minded and ignorant masses of western Pennsylvania; the luckless and impoverished families flying from slavery in Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee; together with such hordes of foreigners as the over-populated countres of Europe are obliged to spare—men of all habits, characters and religions—and these it pours along in a promiscuous flood, to people the new world, and settle into social order as best they may. Then, thirdly, a considerable portion of the new west has a social and historical connexion with slavery, which is continually doubling the inherent perils of emigration itself.

And here, since this institution of slavery, entering into the fortunes of our history, complicates, in so many ways, the disorders we suffer, I must pause a few moments to sketch its characteristics. Slavery, it is not to be denied, is an essentially barbarous institution. It gives us too that sign, which is the perpetual distinction of barbarism, that it has no law of progress. The highest level it reaches, is the level at which it begins. Indeed, we need not scruple to allow that it has yielded us one considerable advantage, in virtue of the fact, that it produces its best condition first. For while the northern people were generally delving in labor, for many generations, to create

a condition of comfort, slavery set the masters at once on a footing of ease, gave them leisure for elegant intercourse, for unprofessional studies, and seasoned their character thus with that kind of cultivation which distinguishes men of society. A class of statesmen were thus raised up, who were prepared to figure as leaders in scenes of public life, where so much depends on manners and social address. But now the scale is changing. Free labor is rising, at length, into a state of wealth and comfort, to take the lead of American society. Meanwhile, the foster sons of slavery—the high families, the statesmen—gradually receding in character, as they must under this vicious institution, are receding also in power and influence, and have been ever since the revolution. Slavery is a condition against nature; the curse of nature therefore is on it, and it bows to its doom, by a law as irresistible as gravity. It produces a condition of ease which is not the reward of labor, and a state of degradation which is not the curse of idleness. Therefore the ease it enjoys cannot but end in a curse, and the degradation it suffers cannot rise into a blessing. It nourishes imperious and violent passions. It makes the masters solitary sheiks on their estates, forbidding thus the possibility of public schools, and preventing also that condensed form of society, which is necessary to the vigorous maintenance of churches. Education and religion thus displaced, the dinner table only remains, and on this hangs, in great part, the keeping of the social state. But however highly we may estimate the humanizing power of hospitality, it cannot be regarded as any sufficient spring of character. It is neither a school, nor a gospel. And when it comes of self-indulgence, or only seeks relief for the tedium of an idle life, scarcely does it bring with it the blessings of a virtue. The accomplishments it yields are of a mock quality, rather than of a real, having about the same relation to a substantial and finished culture, that honor has to character. This kind of currency will pass no longer, for it is not expense without comfort, or splendor set in disorder, as diamonds in pewter; it is not airs in place of elegance, or assurance substituted for ease; neither is it to be master of fluent speech, or to garnish the same with stale quotations from the classics; much less is to live in the Don Juan vein, accepting barbarism by poetic inspiration—the same which a late noble poet, drawing out of Turks and pirates, became the chosen laureate of slavery—not any or all of these can make up such a style of man or of life, as we in this age demand. We have come up now to a point, where we look for true intellectual refinement, and a ripe state of personal culture. But how clearly is it seen to be a violation of its own laws, for slavery to produce a genuine scholar, or a man, who, in any department of excellence, unless it be in politics, is not a full century behind his time. And if we ask for what is dearer and better

still, for a pure Christian morality, the youth of slavery are trained in no such habits, as are most congenial to virtue. The point of honor is the only principle many of them know. Violence and dissipation bring down every succeeding generation to a state continually lower; so that now, after a hundred and fifty years are passed, the slave-holding territory may be described as a vast missionary ground, and one so uncomfortable to the faithful ministry of Christ, by reason of its jealous tempers, and the known repugnance it has to many of the first maxims of the gospel, that scarcely a missionary can be found to enter it. Connected with this moral decay, the resources of nature are also exhausted, and her fertile territories changed to a desert, by the uncreating power of a spendthrift institution. And then, having made a waste where God had made a garden, slavery gathers up the relics of bankruptcy, and the baser relics still of virtue and all-manly enterprise, and goes forth to renew, on a virgin soil, its dismal and forlorn history. Thus, at length, has been produced what may be called the bowie-knife style of civilization, and the new West of the South is overrun by it—a spirit of blood which defies all laws of God and man; honorable but not honest; prompt to resent an injury, slack to discharge a debt; educated to ease, and readier, of course, when the means of living fail, to find them at the gaming-table or the race-ground, than in any work of industry —probably squandering the means of living there, to relieve the tedium of ease itself.

Such is the influence of slavery, as it enters into our American social state, and imparts its moral type of barbarism, through emigration, to the new west. Hence, the Mexican war, which has its beginning and birth in what I have called the bowie-knife style of civilization—a war in the nineteenth century, which, if it was not purposely begun, many are visibly determined shall be, a war for the extension of slavery. It was no one political party, as some pretend who made this war, but it was the whole southwest and west rather of all parties, instigated by a wild and riotous spirit of adventure, which no terms of reason or of Christian prudence and humanity could check. And if this war results, as probably it may, in the acquisition of a vast western territory, then is our great pasture ground of barbarism so much to be enlarged, the room to run wild extended, the chances of final anarchy and confusion multiplied.

We are now prepared to complete our view, by passing directly to the subject of western emigration itself. And what are the moral and social results here preparing? That I can draw a picture of western society, which will be universally approved, is more than I have any right to expect. I can only give such a sketch as the facts seem to require, and without exaggeration; observing, however, that if any western

man should be dissatisfied, it will by no means convince me that I am wrong; for to conceive a people rightly it is not sufficient to know them; they must be viewed from a stand point without. And just as the character of New England cannot be rightly drawn, save as it is viewed from abroad, so no western or westernized man, coming directly out from the scenes of western life, is qualified, on that account, to estimate their social standing and prospects. On the contrary, he may even be partially disqualified, by the experience under which he has fallen. At the same time, let it be understood, that in what I may say, however the public may receive it, I do not consider myself as reflecting any necessary dishonor on the west, or on western society. It is no dishonor in them, any more than it was to New England, to suffer what they must, from the very laws of society itself. On the contrary, if the west puts forth a manly struggle to breast the laws of decline involved in a new social state, it may even display the more heroic qualities, because of the adverse elements it has the spirit to master. Much the same allowances, too, are to be made here, that were supposed to hold in reference to the decline of New England. It is not general or universal. It includes only a portion of western society, and this portion only in regard to certain particulars. Probably there is no decline, but an improvement rather, if we take in all, and regard what I have called the total amount of character. Many of the emigrants from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and yet further south, were at a very low point of character when they removed, and these, brought within the reach even partially of schools and churches, are rapidly improving. If the emigrants from New England lose ground, in manners, piety, and habits of intelligence, they also gain in spirit, freedom, self-reliance, and other qualities that are certainly desirable. Besides, we are making strenuous efforts to save the west from the decline that would otherwise appear; so that while there is a certain tendency to barbarism in their new condition of society, that tendency, we may believe, is held in check, and in many cases displaced, even from the beginning, by signs of improvement.

Western character has many powerful and promising qualities, but it wants the salt of religious virtue, the sobriety of discipline, and the modesty of true intelligence. It is frank, bold, earnest, and positive, but somewhat rude and extravagant, and specially destitute of the genial sentiments which enrich the more settled and cultivated forms of society. A very large portion of the western community, it is well known, are already so far gone in ignorance, as to make a pride of it, and even to decry education as an over-genteel accomplishment. They hold, of course, their manhood in their will, not in their understanding; which is the same as to say that law is weak, and passion violent. Hence, the many public murders, committed

in the newer states of the west and south, which are never legally investigated. Or, perhaps you will even see an ambitious young city, mustering itself in a military mob, to murder an inoffensive Christian minister and citizen; and when it is done, when the fit of passion is over, the law, instead of rising up to re-assert its rights, as we see it do in older and less barbarous communities, still sleeping in its violated majesty. Or, if you will discover how near it is possible to come, and within how short a time, to a complete dissolution of civil order, you may see the executive power of a sovereign state standing by, for six months, to look on, as a spectator, while two organized military parties of its own citizens are prosecuting an open war, one to defend, the other to capture an American city! Where shall such disorders stop? and what is the limit towards which they run? If, in the days of the Judges, Pennsylvania rebelled against the excise of whiskey, and now Illinois substitutes the camp and the siege, in place of justice itself and the ordinary methods of legal redress, what shall by and by appear, in some new state as far west of Illinois, as that is of Pennsylvania? What are we expect as this reign of passion, spreading onward across the vast regions yet unoccupied, grows yet more violent as it is deeper in ignorance, and wilder still, as it is more remote from the haunts of Christian civilization? Is it not well understood that a partially wild race of men, such as cannot any longer be properly included in the terms of civilization, is already formed? I speak of what is sometimes called the pioneer race. They roll on, like a prairie fire, before the advance of regular emigration; they have no fixed habits, and do not care to appropiate the soil, consequently have no education or religion. They live mainly by hunting and pasture; and, when a regular settlement begins within an hour's ride, they feel the proximity too close, quit their hut of logs, which is in fact only their tent, and start on, by another long remove, into the wild regions beyond them. These semi-barbarians, too, are continually multiplying in numbers, and becoming more distinct in their habits. Ere long, there is reason to fear they will be scouring in populous bands over the vast territories of Oregon and California, to be known as the pasturing tribes—the wild hunters and robber clans of the western hemisphere—American Moabites, Arabs, and Edomites!

Or if it seem extravagant to speak of any such result, let it not be forgotten that one emigrant family of the Saxon race has already sunk into barbarism, since our history began. I speak of the Dutch Boers in South Africa. They are Calvinistic Protestants; they began their settlement at Cape Town in the year 1651. And now they are virtually barbarians; for they are scarcely less wild in their habits than the Hottentots themselves. They subsist by pasture, roving from place to

place. Lynch law and private revenge are the principal methods of redressing injuries. Their habits are filthy. Their women do the work. Education is forgotten, and the cruelties they practice in their sanguinary wars, are such as assimilate them to beasts of prey. They are now a race of nominally Christian barbarians—barbarians under the synod of Dort, a standing proof that Protestants, and they too of the Saxon blood, may drop out of civilization, and take their place on the same level of ignorance and social brutality with the barbarous tribes of the earth. Let no American that loves his country refuse to heed the example.

Many are accustomed to regard the exposure of our western country to Romanism with extreme horor, regarding a possible lapse into this corrupt form of religion as the climax of all possible disasters. In that opinion there is quite as little to approve, as there is in the over-confident opinion of those who declare that Romanism cannot spread in this country. Nothing is necessary to make room for Romanism, but to empty us of all opposing qualities; and it will not take a long period of ignorance and religious anarchy to do that. Nor do I mean to imply, in thus speaking, that Romanism can co-exist only with barbarism, much less to sharpen a point of satire against the Romish church. Under this we know are gathered many great and accomplished men, and many nations further advanced, in some respects, than we. I only mean, that while it is possible for a people brought up in Romanism to become socially advanced under it, a free-minded people, brought up in mental and moral habits wholly opposite, never can be led into it, save through the gate of superstition; which gate of superstition can never be opened, save by a loss of knowledge, social order, and religion, such as approximates to barbarism. There may be cases where a cultivated man, wearied out and lost in the mazes of fantastic speculation, throws up suddenly the prerogatives of reason, and takes it for certain that God will do him good, if he has a Levite to his priest. There may be truly godly men—men, so to speak, of an overgrown religious sentiment, who see no consistent issue short of Romanism to assumptions already made, and whose nerves are too weak to go back and manfully sift these assumptions—there may be such who fall a prey to their own delicate illusions, and drop into the Romish church to settle their peace. But these are only caprices, accidents, idiosyncrasies, which support no general conclusion, save that between opposite superlatives, the sublimities and follies of mankind, there is often a natural brotherhood. Thus over-cultivation may sometimes join hands at the church door with barbarism, both entering as fellow proselytes together. Thus, over-speculation will sometimes throw by private judgment in disgust, and place itself on a par with those who have no private judgment to lose. But the great danger of Romanism, the

only danger of any moment, is from the multiplication of the latter class—those who have no private judgment to lose; and it is a real danger. Man is a religious being, and if he cannot come to God through his intelligence, he will come to what sort of God his superstitions offer him. When, therefore, I consider how certainly an ignorant soul is prepared to superstition, remembering also the vast amount of ignorance that prevails among the western people, I want no other proof that superstition has already a wide and terrible sway over the western mind. Or if I suffer a doubt, the great Mormon city and temple rise as proof visible before me—proof, however, that does not accrue as against the west alone, save that it shows how all fantastic errors and absurdities will assuredly congregate there. Who could have thought it possible that a wretched and silly delusion, like that of the Mormons, could gather in its thousands of disciples in this enlightened age, build a populous city, and erect a temple rivalling in grandeur even that of the false prophet at Mecca? And when we see, in facts like these, how readily material may be gathered to represent the times of the Judges, it is vain to imagine that Romanism can find no affinities prepared among us, or that none can be found, who will think it a religion to have a Levite to their priest. Romanism can do anything in this country which we will help it to do, and we ought not to complain if it does no more. Or if we persist in training a barbarous people for its use, let us indulge no regrets that Romanism gives them such a religion as they are capable of receiving.

I have led you thus over a wide field, and yet the subject is not exhausted. But I can pursue the argument no further. If now you ask what is to be the conclusion of the great problem we have on hand; shall we go clear, at last, of all these perils; shall we rise into order, law, intelligence and religion; or will parts of the nation go down at last, below the capacity to rise? I care not to answer that question. Indeed it is a question to be answered, not in speeches or conjectures, but by our works! The answer hangs, not on what we may think or reason, but on what we shall do! We can make it what we desire; we can make it as bad as we have power even to fear! Enough that we understand the magnificence of the problem, and the tremendous perils incident thereto, viz., that we have it on hand to struggle up, for half a century or a century to come, against the downward currents of decline, and bear up the nation with us, into a settled condition of Christian culture and virtue; which if we do, the critical point of our destiny is turned. We are then to be the most august and happiest nation that has ever appeared on earth, the leading power of the world's history. Was there ever a struggle offered to the good and great of mankind, so fit to kindle enthusiasm, or nerve the soul to patient sacrifices!

WHAT, THEN, SHALL WE DO?

First of all, we must not despair. There is no cause for despair. Dark as the picture is that I have given, I do not, for one, suffer a misgiving thought. In many portions of the field, the crisis is already past. In others it soon will be. And every new state or section added to the parts already secure, brings an accession of aid and a more preponderant weight of influence. Of the new regions, we may say that Vermont, Western New York, and a part of Ohio, are already gained, and are now side by side with us, helping us to support the downward pressure of the emigrant masses. We have only to make sure, in like manner, of all the States this side of the Mississippi, and then the critical point is, in my estimation, passed. Much will remain to be done; but the result will be sure. For when once the vast region this side of the Mississippi is seen to be ascending with us into order and Christian refinement, the regions beyond will scarcely be able to drag themselves down into anarchy. The die of our destiny is cast. Seeing then the momentous perils that hang about us, let them only quicken us to a more fixed and heroic devotion. It must be a faint heart that cannot bear up in a struggle so evidently temporary. Nothing is more certain than that, if we deserve to triumph; we shall triumph; and if that be not enough to sustain our courage, we are worthy of no such cause as this.

And what next? We must get rid, if possible, I answer, of slavery. It aggravates every bad tendency we suffer. We cannot, as American Christians, be at peace with it longer. Not forgetting the moderation that belongs to every just cause, we must lift our voices against it, and must not desist from all proper means to secure its removal, till the work is done.

We must also return, as soon as possible, to a condition of peace, and maintain it as the only hope of moral and social progress in our country. War is the proper work only of barbarians—the bane, therefore, of all social order and virtue. Even New England itself, as I have shown you, came near sinking into a fatal debauchery of character in the wars she encountered. For a war exasperates all the evils incident to emigration, postpones all settled habits, and turns all sobriety to madness.

If something could be done to civilize the manner of American politics, to abate the rudeness of political animosities, to establish candor and courtesy and dignity of feeling between opposing parties and their leaders, it would greatly expedite the progress of refinement in our people. And I know of no more ready or proper expedient, than for every Christian man to look at the most interior merits of every cause or question, and stand ready to support the right, bear what name it may.

Be it also understood, that the sooner we have railroads and telegraphs spinning into the wilderness, and setting the re-

motest hamlets in connexion and close proximity with the East, the more certain it is that light, good manners, and Christian refinement, will become universally diffused. For when the emigrant settlements of Minnesota or of Oregon feel that they are just in the suburb of Boston, it is nearly the same thing, in fact, as if they actually were.

Education, too, is another and yet more sacred interest which we are to favor and promote by every reasonable means. Colleges are a great and pressing want; but we want only a few. Indeed, we have enough already for the next twenty years, if only they were fully organized and sufficiently endowed. Subordinate schools, and especially rudimental schools, are a much more pressing want; but these, in order to have any value, must be created and supported principally by the people for whose benefit they exist. The most, therefore, which can be done is to stimulate the demand for such schools, in every convenient manner.

This brings me to speak, last of all, of that which is really the chief, the all-important work, viz., to provide a talented and educated body of Christian teachers, and keep them pressing into the wilderness, as far as emigation itself can go. These mixing with the families, and entering into their new struggles, will stimulate the demand for instruction, assist in the founding of schools and academies, and become the guardians of every good interest. We must throw ourselves out, therefore, upon HOME MISSIONS as the first and sublimest Christian duty which the age lays upon us.

Religion is the only prop on which we can lean with any confidence; and Home Missions are the vehicle of religion. In no form of human society is there any law of self-support and self-conservation. There is no shape of society, least of all any shape of new society, that will not rot itself down and dissolve, unless there descend upon it from above, a conservating power which it has not in itself. Nothing but religion, a ligature binding society to God, can save it. No light, save that which is celestial, no virtue but that which is born of God, no power of motivity but that which is drawn from other worlds, can suffice to preserve, compact, and edify a new social state. It was religion that sustained and finally turned the crisis of New England. It was religion, dispensed by the old Missionary Society of Connecticut, and other sister institutions of a later date, which finally turned the crisis of Vermont, Western New York and Eastern Ohio. Among these later institutions, and as the most vigorous and powerful too of all, we are to class the Home Missionary Society, for which I now speak,—a Society which is now hovering over Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and other new regions beyond, as once it did over the regions just named. It has now a spiritual army six hundred strong, in these fields, and waits to make its hundreds, thous-

ands. For it has undertaken the most magnificent work ever yet appropriated to any human institution, with a zeal proportioned to its grandeur. In this institution, for I speak this evening only to its friends, we are enlisted, as I trust, with whatever of Christian determination God permits us to exercise. Here we feel that we have the future in our charge, and we mean to see the trust faithfully fulfilled. To save this mighty nation; to make it the leading power of the earth; to present to mankind the spectacle of a nation stretching from ocean to ocean, across this broad continent; a nation of free men, self-governed, governed by simple law, without soldiers or a police; a nation of a hundred millions of people, covering the sea with their fleets, the land with cities, roads, and harvests; first in learning and art, and all the fruits of genius, and, what is highest and best of all, a religious nation, blooming in all the Christian virtues; the protector of the poor; the scourge of oppression; the dispenser of light; and the symbol to mankind, of the ennobling genial power of righteous laws, and a simple Christian faith—this is the charge God lays upon us, this we accept, and this, by God's blessing, we mean to perform, with a spirit worthy its magnitude. I say not that we must forsake other and more distant fields of duty. God will never call us to that. I only say that there can be no other duty at all comparable to the duty of saving our country; none that God so manifestly imposes. What less than a romantic folly could it seem, to any sober mind, if such indeed were the alternative, to be pouring out our mercies into the obscure outposts of heathenism, and leaving this great nation, this brightest hope of the ages, to go down as a frustrated and broken experiment!

It is time also to understand, that if we are to fill this great field with Christian churches and a Christian people, we must have a spirit of life in our breasts, and a tone of Christian devotion such as we have not hitherto exhibited. Here is the only real cause of discouragement I know. It is not money, it is not men, it is no mere human outlay that can bear up such a work as this. We want the unworldly spirit; that which knits us, and through us knits our great country to God. And then, also, we want that intense and Christ-like humanity, which will attract the feeling of our whole country towards us. For it is not in oppositions, it is not in raising a crusade against Romanism, or filling the air with outcries of any sort, that we are to save our country. We must rise upon it as the morning, in the tranquility of love. We must rain righteousness upon it, as a genial shower.

It is beautiful also to see that God designs, by the very work we undertake, to fill out and furnish our own Christian type of character and society. In the case of our own fathers, it seems

probable that nothing but the strong pillars of high Calvinism held them up, or could have held them up, till the critical point of their history was passed. There were no missionaries coming over unto them. Nothing could hold them up but an internal force, such as they had in these doctrines—doctrines that were incorporated in their souls, as the spinal column in their bodies. Thus, when their manners were grown wild, their sentiments coarse, and their ill-trained understandings generally incapable of nice speculation, still the tough questions of their theology kept them always in action; still they could grasp hold of the great iron pillars of election, reprobation, and decrees, and their clumsy-handed thoughts were able to feel them distinctly. Whoever could distinguish a thunderbolt could surely think of these, and it mattered not so much whether they thought exactly right, as that they kept thinking, and in their thinking brought down God upon their souls. So they took hold of the iron pillars that held up the theologic heavens, and climbed and heaved in huge surges of might, and kept their gross faculties in exercise, till the critical hour of their trial was passed. The themes they handled kept them too before God. They dwelt in the summits of divine government. They looked upon the throne, they heard the thunders roll below, and felt the empyrean shake above, at the going forth of God's decrees. Such a religion as they had could not be distant or feeble. It had power to invest the coarse mind with a divine presence, and make Jehovah felt as an element of experience. Never was there a better foundation for a grand, massive character in religion; and now God means to finish out this character, by uniting in it the softer shades of feeling, and the broader compass of a more catholic and genial spirit. We go forth now to a people, who unite all manner of opinions, and we go in company with Christians of other names and other creeds, who are undertakers also in the same great work. We cannot, therefore, spend our strength now upon exclusive and distinctive dogmas, but we must proceed in a catholic and comprehensive spirit. Otherwise we shall be at war with each other, and shall only spend our force in demolishing all the force we have. Thus, the Methodists, for example, have a ministry admirably adapted, as regards their mode of action, to the new west—a kind of light artillery that God has organized to pursue and overtake the fugitives that flee into the wilderness from his presence. They are prompt and efficient in action, ready for all service, and omnipresent, as it were, in the field. The new settler reaches the ground to be occupied, and by the next week he is likely to find the circuit crossing by his door, and to hear the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you!" Our Methodist brethren have put on their armor, too, against the enemies of learning among themselves. They are building colleges, and

one among the number, which they mean to make the most co
plete and best endowed university in the west. If sometim
their demonstrations are rude, and their spirit of rivalry vi
lent, still it is good to have such rivals, for their labor is st
ours, and when they have reached the state of intelligence the
are after, they are sure to become effectually, if not formally
one with us. Therefore let there be, if possible, no controversy
with them; but let us rather encourage ourselves in a work so
vast, by the fact that we have so vast an army of helpers in the
field with us. So of all the other Christian families, who are
going into the field to do a work for their master. There should
be not only concord of spirit, but also an actual understanding;
so that we may cover together as much ground as possible. And
then we should all go forth together, to calm the angry divisions
of controversy and sweeten the bitter prejudices of sectarian
strife. Earnest for the truth, we must also remember that
truth itself is catholic and comprehensive. We must shun that
vapid liberalism, which, instead of attracting us into unity, will
only dissolve us into indifference, and yet we must be willing
to stretch our forbearance and charity even to Romanists them-
selves, when we clearly find the spirit of Jesus in their life. In
this manner, God will instruct us by our work, and make our
work itself our reward. Engaging with our utmost ardor to
save the wilder portions of our country, we shall carry on thus
our own noble beginnings to completion, and finish out a char-
acter, as earnest in its sacrifices and catholic in its charities, as
it is firm in its original elements. May we not also hope to
draw down from the skies upon us and upon all the regions for
which we labor, such a baptism of love as will melt both us
and them, and all the families of Christ in our land, into one
Christian fraternity! Then will we go on and give it to our sons
and daughters to come after us. We will measure our strength
by the grandeur of our object. The wilderness shall bud and
blossom as the rose before us; and we will not cease, till a Chris-
tian nation throws up its temples of worship on every hill and
plain; till knowledge, virtue and religion, blending their dignity
and their healthful power, have filled our great country with a
manly and a happy race of people, and the bands of a complete
Christian commonwealth are seen to span the continent.

And now, Jehovah God, thou who by long ages of watch and
discipline, didst make of thy servant Abraham a people, be thou
the God also of this great nation. Remember still its holy begin-
nings, and for the fathers' sakes, still cherish and sanctify it. Fill
it with thy Light and thy Potent Influence; till the glory of thy
Son breaks out on the western sea, as now upon the eastern, and
these uttermost parts, given to Christ for a possession, become
the bounds of a new Christian Empire, whose name the believing
and the good of all people shall hail as a name of hope and
blessing!

BEAUTY OF FORGIVENESS.

"How beautiful falls
From human lips that blessed word, FORGIVE."

IF there is anything which has power to bind the heart of man with a firm, enduring affection, it is forgiveness, called forth by meek, sincere, unconditional repentance. Every one of us, however short our lives and slight our experience, can perhaps remember when, having done injustice to some one near and dear, pardon has been implored and forgiveness readily and affectionately granted—can remember, I say, the magic with which it swept away any lingering trace of alienated feeling, and bound with renewed strength every sentiment of regard and esteem. The faculty of forgiving and receiving forgiveness is one of the finest in human nature. It is the main point in every noble, every refined and elevated character. Dark, sinister and intriguing men can never forgive, and the consciousness of being for given is sufficient to arouse their darkest passions.

If a man wishes to live a peaceful, rational life, he must call forgiveness often into action; and he will find it has the magic of a charm to allay all bitterness, reconcile all differences, dispel all those petty quarrels which so often embitter the intercourse of even good men. It is the glorious element in God's government over man, as well as an essential, life-giving principle of the plan of redemption. It is the leading feature of Holy Writ, and finds an ardent, sincere response in the bosom of every high-minded man. It is the strongest link in the chain that binds the heart of every Christian to his Lord and Master. It is the consciousness of being forgiven, that awakens all the nobler emotions of his soul, and rouses his dormant energies to active service in the cause of his Redeemer.

Forgiveness from God or man, lays an individual under obligations that, to a sensitive, delicate mind, are anything but unpleasant or humiliating. A certain degree of pride of character is far from being reprehensible—it gives force and dignity; but the pride that cannot ask forgiveness, is obstinacy, is stubbornness; and the mind that it will not melt and subdue, must be dead to all that is noble, destitute of all that assimilates to divinity, and fiendish enough for pandemonium itself. Could the world at large be induced to enter upon the practice of forgiveness, its use would soon be obviated, and the millennium dawn upon us in all its splendor and glory.

Let us then remember, that as in the ocean the greatest commotion is produced by the action of small particles one upon another, so we, although insignificant members of an extensive community, are constantly coming in contact one with another, and transmitting our thoughts, feelings and opinions. And however our feelings may be injured, our characters assailed, our tempers vexed and tried, let us remember, it is God-like to forgive.—FLETCHER.

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SERMON CCCCLX.

BY REV. DAVID MAGEE, D.D.,

ELIZABETHTOWN, N. J.

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OUR TRUE ENCOURAGEMENT.

Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high.—Isaiah, 32: 15.

As regards the final and universal triumphs of the Gospel, no believer in the Bible can entertain a doubt. Glorious things are spoken of Zion, the City of our God, and we are assured, explicitly, that the kingdoms of this world shall one day become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. That light which now shines on our path, is yet to lighten all the Gentiles, and be the glory of the people of Israel.

Thus it is written, and thus it will be. But what is to secure the ultimate coming of this happy period? Our hope all hangs on one single thing—the promise of the Spirit—and occupying the position we do in the annals of time, we can look neither backward nor forward, without being convinced how dependent we are on such aid. What has been done, teaches us this; and what is still to be done teaches it with even greater emphasis. Every past conquest has been the effect of union and communion with the Divine Comforter; and our ability to carry on the enterprise in a way at all commensurate with the grandeur of the object before us, must be derived from the same source. Even more than former assistance will be needed. Instead of occasional drops of mercy, water must be poured upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.

The text refers to this; and it is too well understood to require

any particular explanation. Suffice it simply to say, that the chapter begins with a cheering account of the approach of a brighter day; but it goes on to tell us, that in the meantime, a season of gloom and depression would ensue, to be terminated only by the pouring out of the Spirit from on high. This would work a delightful change. Then the wilderness would become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

No language could be more appropriate to us, in the relation which we, as a Missionary Society, sustain to the conversion of the world. Large as are our resources, numerous as are the labourers we have sent forth, and strong as is the hold which this blessed cause has taken on the affections of the people, we were never more dependent on help from heaven than at this very moment. Without special divine aid we can do nothing. God must plentifully imbue our hearts with the influences of the Spirit, that we may use *the right means for effecting our object*, that we may *prosecute the work with proper energy*, and that we may see *our efforts attended with success*. These are the points which I wish to illustrate and enforce.

I. The Spirit of God must be with us, *or we shall not use the right means for converting the world.*

Our undertaking is a vast one, and we are not left in uncertainty as to the way in which it is to be accomplished. That Gospel, which God has given us to spread as well as to enjoy, was made for man, and though there is in it no independent efficacy, it does possess an adaptedness to the renovation of his moral nature. No matter where you meet him, or whatever be the depth of his depravity, this is the remedy for his ruin. There is here an ordained channel through which the Spirit of God operates to change the heart, make the poor Pagan a new creature, turn the desert into a goodly land, and fill a world of crime and sorrow with righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Sending the knowledge of Christ abroad through the nations, is the appointed method of saving men. We know of no other means—having thus the seal of heaven upon them—for subverting the kingdom of Satan, rooting idolatry out of the earth, and restoring our race to fellowship with their Maker.

The commission under which we act runs thus—to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified. To bring about this result, we are confined to a single instrumentality—the pure, unadulterated Gospel—that Gospel which we ourselves have received, and wherein we stand. This we are pledged, as far as in us lies, to send abroad to all them that dwell on the face of the earth, assured that nothing is wanting to cause the truth to triumph everywhere, but the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit. Our great busi-

ness is to teach men that they have ruined themselves by sin, to lead them to disclaim all righteousness of their own, and to bring them to a cordial trust in the blood of the cross. We must give the heathen that very Gospel which was preached on the day of Pentecost, which the Reformation carried into the heart of Germany, which was found in the caves and mountains of Scotland when she was faithful to her covenant, which our Puritan Fathers brought with them from the old world, and which glowed with divine life in the bosom of an Edwards, a Brainerd, and a Davies. This is the panoply in which we are to wage war with the powers of darkness. We have no other armour.

This Gospel we are to send, in simplicity and godly sincerity, to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. It must be our determination, at every stage of progress, not to know anything save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and so long as we pursue the work in this way, we may be cheered with the conviction that an instrumentality on which God has a thousand times made his impress, will not be employed in vain. This can save a soul from death, and it can save a world from death. If we ever forget that there is a principle of vitality in the genuine Gospel—the plan of salvation, the story of the crucifixion—when thus applied, we shall find the very sinews of missionary effort all cut at once. The words that I speak unto you, said the Great Teacher, they are spirit, and they are life. There shall be a handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains, the fruit whereof shall shake like Lebanon.

It is more faith in God's instrumentality that we need. We look at the Gospel, and what is it, if left to itself, but the declaration of a fact—the narrative of an event—the revelation of a doctrine? How can it change the heart of a heathen, and create new sensations, and lead to new solicitudes, and awaken new joys there, to tell him that in Christ we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace? The cause seems unequal to the effect. But when there goes, along with the statement of such facts, an unseen agency, more powerful than that which makes the mountains tremble, all difficulty is removed. The Gospel is not the breath of man, it is the power of God. It is not a feeble weapon, it is the sword of the Spirit. It is not a mere tale of wonder, it is a message of life. Nothing that the world has ever seen descends so deeply into the seat of human sympathies, or works such revolutions in the character of man.

The kind of duty we have to perform is obvious. We but go forth, in the persons of our missionaries, to declare, in the school, along the way-side, and at the temple of idolatry, that which we ourselves have seen, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life. There is no necessity for our

being told, that this is God's method for working salvation in the midst of the earth. Never can it be matter of surprise to us, that the bare reading of the story of the crucifixion, in the lonely tent of a man of God in Greenland, should be attended with such power as to strike the mind of a half-sleeping heathen at the door, and prompt him to exclaim, "Those are precious words, let me hear them again." We must forget our own conversion, before these things can appear strange.

It is no part of our business to make experiments for the relief of human woe, or the removal of human guilt. We have a Saviour to speak of; whose blood we know cleanseth from all sin; we have the invitation to give: whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely; and then, to complete our resources, we have the promise, Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. This is our reliance. Thus equipped, we go out to fight God's battle among men. And sad will be the day when our compassion for sinners begins to dig for itself a channel different from that in which the Saviour's flowed, or our impatience to get the work done leads us to the use of means such as he has not authorized. All we can do—all we are allowed to do—is to take our stand at the fool of the cross, and point the heathen to its bleeding victim. Our sole expedient for saving men from hell, is the atonement of Calvary, the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God; that righteousness which is unto all, and upon all them that believe. These constitute the glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. When our sons and our daughters leave us to cross oceans, and climb mountains, and journey over valleys, we must charge them to repeat everywhere the story of the apostacy, and of the death of Christ to remove the curse. We must exhort them to say, God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

These are the means by which we are to accomplish our object, and we need to be kept to them without deviation or faltering. This can be done only by such a measure of divine influence, daily exerted upon our hearts, as shall cause the Gospel to loom up largely and gloriously before us, and inspire us with a perfect confidence in its divinely appointed efficacy. As a missionary organization, the presence with us of the Good Spirit, is indispensable. No resolutions, however stringent, to require an orthodox creed in those who enter the foreign field—no well adjusted frame-work of ecclesiastical supervision—no votes of councils or synods to commission only good men and true, will secure the giving of real, vital Christianity to the nations. These things may be useful and important, but they are not sufficient. The moment we ourselves become indifferent to the doctrines of total depravity, justification by faith, and regeneration by the Spirit,

the trumpet we blow on the other side of the globe, will give an uncertain sound. We shall plant no better religion than we possess.

There is a downward tendency in man—in the best of men—and in the best of men engaged in the holiest work, and which nothing can effectually counteract, but a constantly exerted divine influence. Charters, subscriptions, pledges, will not do it. These, when the heart gets wrong, are weak as a thread of tow. God, the Holy Ghost, must be with us at every step, or we shall even lose those things which we have already wrought, and never receive a full reward.

Let me add: this view of the Gospel, as the wisdom of God, and the power of God, will impart such an aspect of simplicity to our aims, and give such a type of homogeneousness to our efforts, as will help us to move forward with harmony in our great work. We shall not then lay out our strength on extraneous matters or matters which though valuable in themselves, do not properly belong to us as a Missionary Society. Our object, be it never forgotten, is not to make any direct attack upon forms of civil government, however cruel and despotic, or to carry a crusade into the arrangements of social life, however inconsistent they may seem with the highest degree of human happiness. These may be great evils here, and they may lie very much in our way, but the first assault is not to be made on these out-works. If we feel as Paul felt, or as Martyn felt, or as Christ felt, our chief desire will be to secure, for the real Gospel, a lodgment in the heart, assured that this is the divine method of reforming the life. We need not fear. Truth is like chain-shot—give one link its direction, and it will draw after it the entire charge. Make the heathen Christians, and they will not fail to become men.

Such is our work, and such are the appliances with which we are furnished for carrying it on. The Gospel, preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is all we need to recover men from their sins, and make this world of ours vocal with the high praises of God. This comprises the length and breadth of our duty. Our service is performed when, in reliance on divine aid, we have testified in the face of all nations repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. But,

II. Unless the Holy Spirit be with us, *we shall never prosecute our work with proper energy.*

No missionary enterprise can be expected to flourish, which does not take fast hold on the hearts, and deeply move the sympathies of its friends. This is a cause of too much import to be carried on lukewarmly. Some years ago, a number of young men, candidates for service in foreign lands, in the Papal Church, pledged themselves to God and to each other to be faithful, by each opening a vein in his arm and writing his name in his own

blood. I plead not for this. It may have been superstition. But if covenanting in blood can bind man to his duty, then we are bound with ligatures which can never be broken.

It is easy to see that one of the main purposes of the Church on earth, is her own self-extension. We learn, on every page of the history of the early propagation of the Gospel, that the apostles did not ordain elders in every city, chiefly, much less exclusively, to keep ground already gained, or to rejoice in conquests already made. With them the field was the world. Their plan was an out-going, an aggressive one. But this is a kind of work which we shall never follow up with a full heart, except as our desire to spread the Gospel, as well as our individual appreciation of it, is quickened by the Spirit of God. Neither of these things is natural to us, and unless supplied, as was the oil in the prophet's vision, they will grow weak and vanish away. We know, by sad experience, that our persuasion of a personal welcome to trust in Christ, becomes indistinct, whenever we are left to ourselves; and we also know that when thus left, we forget the claims of a dying world.

The Church, every one admits, ought to place the sending of the Gospel to the heathen among the most solemn and clearly ascertained of all her duties. It belongs to her to see that her members are kept apprised of the aspects and wants of this vast undertaking, cheerfully providing the means for every newly projected occupation of the enemy's country, and carefully watching over young Christians of promise, to mark the developments of their character, as to any special fitness for such service. These are points in relation to which there can be no doubt. Who can hesitate to believe that the bringing forward of candidates for this high employment, should be an object of the deepest interest to every Minister of the Gospel, every professor of theology, and every ecclesiastical judicatory? Parents ought to prize such a post for a beloved son or daughter, above one in the retinue of an ambassador to the mightiest potentate on earth. Daily should prayer be made that the Holy Ghost would separate our Barnabases and our Sauls to the work of Christian Missions.

But how are we to get up to this state of feeling, and this standard of action? We shall but practice an imposition upon ourselves if we merely compare what is now doing with what was done a few years ago, instead of summoning courage to ask what the opening providences of God require at our hands, or what our own good hope through grace should prompt us to undertake. All seems bright and animated enough, when mingling in an immense congregation like this, to exchange Christian salutations, and to sharpen each the countenance of his friend, by the rehearsal of some striking incident. We might almost suppose that the tribes of the Lord had assembled to decide which should have the honour

of going up first to possess the land. There are ministers enough, and friends of the Redeemer enough to move the world. But let us beware how we take this as the actual gauge of missionary zeal among us. We can attend anniversaries, and make speeches, and indulge in the luxury of pleasant feeling, better than we can go into our closets and pray, "Thy kingdom come," and better than we can write holiness to the Lord on all our possessions and enjoyments. Alas! we have very little of the mind that was in him who cried out, in relation to his work, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Never shall we act with energy until we have more of the Spirit of God.

This is no time for self-felicitation. If we are in advance of some by-gone ages, we fall most reproachfully behind the feeling and effort of primitive times. The records of the struggles of the early disciples of the Saviour with Paganism of the world, brief as these records are, furnish proof of the most conclusive kind, against us. How they toiled and suffered, we well know, for the statement is, that to their power, yea, and beyond their power, they gave of their substance, praying the Apostles with much entreaty, to take upon them the ministering to the Saints. No wonder that the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. Calamitous as the times were, we find the religion of the Crucified One triumphing, in a few centuries, over ten violent persecutions, and then, instead of being shorn of her strength, putting on the purple, and sitting down on the throne of the Cæsars.

But now, alas, half our strength has to be expended in trying to keep our enterprise up to lines already reached. Instead of onward movements, enlarging year by year, to correspond with the calls, which an open world, and fields everywhere white to the harvest, addressing to us, we seem, so far as men and money, and new stations are concerned, to be almost stationary; yes, and this too, at a time, when every branch of secular business is borne forward on such a tide of prosperity, as the land has never known before.

Why this falling off from the zeal and self-denial of the first disciples? Only give us the same implicit faith in the realities of the world to come, the same abiding conviction of the value of the soul, the same unshaken reliance on the blood of the Cross, and above all, the same accompanying influence of the Spirit of God, and we can work as well as primitive believers. As for external means aud resources, we are better off than they ever were. Not only have we wealth on our side, which they had not, and science, which they had not, and the countenance of civil governments, which they had not, but we have the Bible translated, and the means of translating it, into almost every language under heaven. We can do what they did—carry the Gospel to every city—and then we can do what they did not, and could not do—leave copies of the word of God in every city.

So far as resources are concerned, and acquaintance with the condition of the world, and rapidity of communication with lands afar off, we have advantages over all the friends of the Redeemer, of past ages, inspired and uninspired. But in one thing, many of them excelled us. They felt—as I fear we do not—their need of power from on high, and go where they might, they seem to have carried with them a never failing assurance that, when they planted and watered, God would give the increase. This was their grand distinction over modern times. It was not simply that they could speak with tongues, having never learned them—it was not that it was given them in the same hour what they should say—nor was it that they could confirm their testimony by signs and wonders following. These things did not change the hearts of honourable men and women not a few. It was not thus that a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith. There must be along with all this, and in addition to it all, the working of that same power, which wrought in Christ, when he was raised from the dead, to give the truth any saving effect. This they sought, and this they enjoyed. O, had we the same confidence in divine aid, we should go forward with energy, and a voice would soon be heard, saying to the North, give up; and to the South keep not back. Bring thy sons from far, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth.

For my part, I despair of ever seeing the Church come up to any suitable standard of praying, and giving, and doing, until the Spirit is more copiously poured upon us from on high. Nothing else can reach the secret place of feeling in these cold bosoms of ours, or indite those effectual, fervent, supplications which avail much, or open the purse of this money-loving generation. We are shut up to this single resource. It only remains to say.

III. That the Spirit must be given us, or we shall never see *our efforts crowned with success.*

In no other way can one chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight. There is something in a simple dependence on divine help, which will not fail to impart to our labours a character so earnest and decided as to betoken a favourable result; while, at the same time, it will be sure to invest them with a becoming air of sobriety and self-distrust. We always work best ourselves, when we feel that God is working in us both to will and to do. This is an infallible cure for despondency. How can difficulties, be they what they may, depress the man who really believes that the heart of the imperious Brahmin, the fiery Druze, or the degraded Zulu, is in the hand of the Lord, as the clay in the hand of the potter? This is encouragement enough. The floods may lift up—the floods may lift up their voice—yea, the floods may lift up their waves, but thou, O Lord, on high, art mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

If we only use the right means, in the right way, failure is impossible. Long ago was the matter settled that the seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head; and how can we entertain a doubt, as we trace this promise on and find it amplified and rendered more distinct by successive prophets of the Most High, until at length God is manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory. It is no more an open question whether nations shall come bending to him, and kings bow down before him. This point is fixed, and all misgiving is sinful. Once it was sublimely said, fear not, you carry Cæsar and his fortunes; but now it is said, in language of far higher and nobler sublimity, fear not, for God is with you, and sooner or later your work shall be rewarded. Confidence in an invisible arm is, of itself, an element of prosperity. Read the history of men who have been strong, and done exploits in the world, and you will find that they were carried steadily forward by a confidence, which scarcely ever forsook them, in supernatural aid. It was so with that remorseless tyrant who styled himself the Scourge of God—it was so with Cortes, as he trampled unoffending nations under his bloody feet—it was so with Cromwell, when he bound kings with chains and princes with fetters of iron—it was so with Washington, as he lifted up his head serenely above the clouds and storms of the Revolution—it was so, in a better, higher, nobler sense, with Luther, and Whitfield, and Paul. Nothing so nerves the arm and strengthens the heart, as confidence in God. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.

This is a point which we ought to ponder again and again. I grant that the Gospel which we are labouring to send out over the world, is so little after man, as well as the doctrines it inculcates, as in the duties it enjoins, that we can have no hope of its ultimate and universal triumph, but in the belief of an accompanyiug divine operation. This is true everywhere. Even here, among ourselves, where a general Christian sentiment exists, where the laws and usages of society favour a profession of godliness, and where the labours of the preacher are enforced by living epistles for Christ, known and read of all men—we have nothing else to depend upon. What, then, shall we do without the Spirit of God in a work which carries us out far beyond the range of all evangelical influence? Those who go forth to convert men in lands where every train of thought, and every prejudice of education, and every habit of life, are cast in a Pagan mould, must find themselves weak as babes, except as they are girded with strength from on high.

But here light breaks in upon us. No antecedent preparation is necessary to encourage our hopes, when we carry the Gospel to the dark places of the earth. The footsteps of Revelation do not require to be preceded by the march of science, nor does the effi-

cacy of the story of the Cross need to be prepared for by any previous culture of mind or manners. So far as respects such auxiliaries, the Gospel is competent to go alone. We may safely give it as a first lesson. The simple recital of God's plan of saving men, attended by that almighty influence which we are fully justified in expecting, meets the savage and tames him, the barbarian and civilizes him, the Hottentot and elevates him, the Dyak and subdues him. An omnipotent energy goes along with the oft-repeated tale. We may liken it to the silent and noiseless influence of the sun, visiting us with his morning beams and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race—or to the quiet and serene efficacy of the dew, as it descends with the shades of the evening to spread fertility abroad over the earth. These energies are so mild in their movements, as not to awaken infancy in its cradle, or disturb old age on its weary bed. But quiet and potent as are such operations of nature, they are only emblems of an equally quiet, though infinitely more potent operation of grace which, in the manifold wisdom of God, is made to attend the simple annunciation of the Gospel.

We rest with confidence here. It is the purpose of the Father thus to give the Son a seed to serve him. On the strength of a prediction so encouraging, we may press forward, assured that God will take out of the nations a people for hinself, and that in no tribe or city, where the Gospel is faithfully preached, will there fail to be a remnant, according to the election of grace. What if our efforts are powerless in themselves? We have only in obedience to the divine command, to fill the valley of Edom with ditches, and the water to supply them will, in due time, come, either from the clouds, or the bowels of the earth. Moses hesitated about attempting to deliver his brethren. But he, at length, went on, aud the Nile was turned into blood, and hail-stones and coals of fire descended, and darkness covered the land—and the first-born died—and Pharaoh let the people go. Nothing is too hard for the Lord.

Jesus is to see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, and the spirit, in the hearts of believers is to secure to him this reward. We anticipate the time, when France, with her little remnant of true faith revived, shall build again her long since dilapidated Huguenot temples—when the active penetrating mind of Germany shall work out a second Reformation, more glorious than the first—and when all Europe shall inquire after the old paths, and recover the precious doctrine of justification by faith. India too, with her idolatrous sons, iucluding the kingdoms which have gone after the false Prophet, with his crescent, his battle-field, and his Sensual Paradise—and China, at whose walls we were so long and so anxoiusly waiting, with all her uncounted millions shall welcome the Gospel of the blessed God—yes, and even Africa,

poor Africa, steeped in crime and sorrow at home, and everywhere abroad goaded and peeled by the bloody whip of the task-master. shall come forward and lift up her head among the ransomed nations, and rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ sets his people free. These lands are all to join our own, with her noble rivers, her extensive lakes, her beautiful prairies, and her lofty mountains, in placing the crown upon the head of Immanuel. Blessed prospect! May God hasten it in his time!

Nay more—reality already begins to mingle with prediction, and accomplishment follows upon the heels of anticipation. When we reflect upon the steady and long-continued blessings which have descended upon our labours at Ceylon—the wonders of mercy wrought in the Sandwich Islands—almost renewing the days of old—the solemn movement among the Armenians, bringing forth in such lovely forms all the fruits of the Spirit—and the convictions and conversions now occurring in the midst of the Nestorians, it seems to me, if we should altogether hold our peace, the very stones would cry out. With all that has thus been predicted, and all that has thus been achieved spread out together before our eyes, can it be deemed premature to say: O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain. O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid—say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.

Such, fathers and brethren, are some of the views which it seemed to me important to present, on this occasion. Called to the discharge of a duty, which no one can expect to perform a second time, it has been my heart's desire and prayer to God, to be led to suggest such trains of thought, as might benefit myself, and my fellow-labourers in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. This object I have sought to gain, by fixing our minds on the Holy Spirit of promise, as our good hope in seeking to convert the world.

Now, as we sit here, and contemplate all this, what is the first feeling that springs up in every pious bosom? I speak for you, disciples of the Saviour! It is one of gratitude to God—gratitude that we ourselves have heard the joyful sound, and been brought to bow to the sceptre of King Jesus; gratitude that to us is given the privilege of being almoners of salvation to a lost world—a privilege which Gabriel before the throne might covet—a gratitude that we have the pledge of an influence to accompany our efforts, which shall eventually cause the truth everywhere to triumph. It is for this, among other reasons, that we are kept a little while out of heaven. Christ will have us suffer with him, and labour with him awhile, that we may, at length, be more fully glorified together. Our business then is, not to sit down content with the fact that we have been begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection

of Jesus Christ from the dead; or to rejoice in trophies already won; or successes already gained among the heathen, but to gird up our loins anew for a further onset upon the kingdom of darkness.

For this we have special encouragement in the times in which our lot is cast. Never is it to be forgotten, that we are not only living under what the Apostle calls the ministration of the Spirit, but we are now approaching that period of it, when developments of mercy are to be expected, more numerous and striking than have distinguished any past age. The great promise of the Old Testament was fulfilled eighteen hundred years ago. Thus it was that wisdom built her house, and hewed out her pillars, and killed her beasts, and mingled her wine, and furnished her table, and ever since she has been sending out her maidens, and crying in the high places of the cities. But we want one blessing more; the promise of the New Testament, the pouring out of the Spirit. An atonement has been made, commensurate with the exigencies of the world, and all that we can need additional is, the coming of that blessed Comforter, whose presence in the Church is more than a compensation for the departure of the Saviour. This is the gift in which are wrapped up the destinies of the race.

Nothing else can keep alive the missionary zeal of the Church. It will not do to reply upon such highly wrought descriptions of the sorrows of those who hasten after another god, as the talents and eloquence of the friends of this good cause may now and then give. Emotion may, in this way, be excited in our breasts, and tears drawn from our eyes. But we cannot calculate upon feeling thus awakened; the fountain is not full enough. The impression is not abiding enough. Besides, the oft-repeated looking upon the miseries of heathenism, apart from all divine influence, like familiarity with any other miseries, must tend to harden rather than soften the heart. We need to be impelled by a higher motive. To hold out in such a work as this, we must have the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Hence, too, arises all our encouragement. Faith in the efficacy of the Gospel, when preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is the mainspring of every effort to save the heathen. Man's utter ruin is a fact, written so clearly upon every page of the Bible, and portrayed so vividly in the whole history of the race, that it cannot be gainsayed. That the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin is also a fact, which no believer in revelation can hesitate for a moment to admit. Now, all that is necessary is for the remedy to be applied to the disease, and that is done, done effectually and gloriously, when the Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto men. This is the agency, which can render our dead and dark world instinct with the presence, and radiant with the beauties of holiness.

But alas, we have very little of the special presence of the blessed Spirit. The discouragements, which press upon us, and weaken our strength in the work, come not, I am sorry to say, from the other side of the globe, but arise from the state of the Churches in our own land. There is nothing disheartening in the intelligence which reaches us from abroad, but we are grieved with the lukewarmness at home. We are not straitened in the promise, or Providence, or Grace of God, but we are straitened, most sadly straitened by the apathy, and worldliness, and declension of the Church. O, for a general and powerful revival of religion! We must have it. The work cannot advance in any other way. It is impossible for the stream to rise above the fountain.

Our duty, Christian friends, all converges to a single point. It is prayer, prayer—prayer for the Spirit that we need. Such prayer as was offered by that little band that waited at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. Such prayer as Brainerd offered on the banks of the Susquehanna, and Martyn on the plains of India. Such prayer as was offered by the dying Bakus, when he asked for the privilege of getting out of his bed, to lift up his soul once more to God. This is a blessing which we cannot do without. I would call, then, upon every blood-bought disciple of the Saviour here this evening. I would lift up my voice in notes loud enough to reach every Christian in the land. I would send out an affectionate exhortation to our brethren and sisters abroad, and say, ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Go ask your Father in heaven, that the coming twelve months may be signalized everywhere, among the Churches here and at all our missionary stations in nominal Christendom, and in lands of pagan darkness, by the pouring down upon us of the Spirit of God.

I feel emboldened to press this point, because I know that if that voice could reach us again, to which we loved to listen on these hallowed occasions, and which was heard in tones of such sublime serenity, amidst the ocean's roar and the work of death, it would be lifted up with more than all its former pathos and power, to charge us to pray for the Spirit of God. Two things, that beloved brother never forgot—the atonement of Christ, and the work of the Spirit. I knew him well from the time when his face was first irradiated with the smiles of a newly-cherished hope, until the Master came, in the midst of storm, and waves, and darkness, to call to himself; and I can testify, that never, at home or abroad, in the repose of his own fireside, or the fatigues of journeys, did he forget his indebtedness to Christ and the Spirit.

Blest Saint! Thy voice is hushed, but thy example shall not

be lost upon us. Thy presence is no more seen here, but we will remember the cheerful and confiding features of thy face. We miss thee from our assemblies, but we know that thou dost still love the heathen.

That good man is gone, and we shall never all meet again. Whatever acquaintance most of us can hope to have in this world, we are forming now in this holy convocation, while deliberating on the great interests of the Redeemer's kingdom among men, and renewing our pledges of fidelity to him over the symbols of his broken body, and shed blood. O, may our intercourse be such that we shall review it with pleasure, when we come to cast our crowns at the feet of Immanuel.

SERMON CCCCLXI.

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ORTHODOXY NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE DIVINE BENEVOLENCE.

"God is love."—1 JOHN, 4: 8.

THAT "God is love," is here asserted on the authority of Jehovah himself. After such an announcement, to attempt to prove the proposition would be more than superfluous. It would be a virtual impeachment of the truth and sufficiency of Scripture. It would be as much as to say, that a positive declaration of God's word was not worthy of credence, unless supported by other evidence. But though the proposition in the text requires no proof, it may require explanation; and my object, in the following discourse, will be,

I. To explain it. And,

II. To show its consistency with the leading principles of the orthodox faith.

I. "God is love." The love here spoken of is that of *benevolence*; a wishing well to the universe of being; an earnest preferring and seeking of the highest universal good. This love of benevolence enters into, it constitutes the root and element of all holiness. The law of God, in its spirit requires nothing else. Love, in this

sense, is represented in the Scriptures as "the bond of perfectness;" the "fulfilling of the law;" and as that on which "hang all the law and the prophets." It is represented in the text as comprising the whole of the Divine character, "God is love."

The language here used refers, of course, not to the *substance*, the *essence* of the Deity, but to his affections, his exercises, his moral character. Benevolence is not a natural, but a *moral* attribute of God. His whole character is one of love.

Love always has an object. To suppose the affection of love to exist without an object—love, where there is nothing loved, would be an absurdity. What, then, are the *objects* of Divine love? Or, in other words, *what does God love*; and in what *measure* and *manner* is his love exercised?

In the first place, God loves *himself*, as he deserves; and that is with a supreme affection. He has a supreme regard, as he should have, for his own glory. For any other being in the universe to love himself supremely, would be to love himself out of all proportion. It would be selfishness. But it is no selfishness in God to love himself supremely; for he is really worthy of supreme affection. His interests and honour are more to be regarded than those of any, or of all, other beings. If his love is disinterested and impartial; if he loves every being—and himself among the rest—according to its intrinsic worthiness, then he *must* love himself more than all. Accordingly, the Scriptures represent him as having a supreme regard for himself, or as being himself the end of his own creation. "The Lord hath made all things for *himself*." "For *thy pleasure* they are and were created."

I remark, secondly, God loves his *creatures*, all and each of them, according to its intrinsic worthiness, considered as a part of the infinite whole. God loves the blessed inhabitants of heaven not beyond what is fit and right; but precisely *according* to what is fit and right; not enough to prompt him to bless them beyond what is in itself proper, and what the greatest good of the whole requires, but simply *as* the greatest good requires. Love for the saints and angels of heaven going beyond this, would be a childish, partial affection. Love, falling short of this, would be imperfect and sinful from defect.

God loves, with a love of benevolence, the inhabitants of hell; and in the precise measure that has just been stated; not enough to screen them from merited punishment—that punishment which their sins deserve, and which the highest good of the whole requires to be inflicted; for, this, again would be a childish, partial affection. It would be a weakness, an imperfection in the Divine character. But God loves the inhabitants of hell enough to prevent him from punishing them beyond their deserts, or beyond what the greatest good of the whole demands. His love for them, therefore, is strictly *impartial*, and their sufferings are, in the largest and best

sense, a fruit of love—love to the universe—a holy and benevolent regard for his own glory, and the greatest good.

God loves the world, not enough to save it at the expense of his own honour, and to the injury of the universe; for this, again, would be a childish and partial love. But he loves it enough to devise and open a way in which salvation can be freely offered to it, in perfect consistency with his own honour as a Sovereign, and the best interests of that universe over which he reigns. He loves it enough to send his only-begotten Son to die for it, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but have everlasting life.

God loves sinners under the Gospel, not enough to save them in a rejection of the Gospel, and while they pour contempt on its gracious provisions. But he loves them enough to continue to them the abused blessings of his providence, and the means of his grace—to strive with them, and cry after them, and do all he consistently can do, while probation lasts, to bring them to the knowledge and acceptance of his mercy.

God loves his own people here in the world, not enough to exempt them from trials and afflictions—from that measure of chastisement which his own glory and their best good require. But he loves them too well either to afflict or prosper them other than in faithfulness; either to give or withhold more than is consistent with a wise regard for their best interests.

In short, God is love to being in general, and to every individual being, in fit and due proportion. He loves himself more than all other beings, because he is intrinsically worthy of such a measure of love. And he loves every individual of his creatures, from the highest to the lowest, from the greatest to the least, the good and the bad, the intelligent and the merely sentient, in exact proportion to its intrinsic worthiness of his regards.

It is in this extended, universal sense, that "God is love;" or that love may be said to enter into and comprise the whole moral perfection of the Deity. Every moral attribute which goes to constitute and adorn his character is, in its element, its essence, love. Thus justice, considered as an attribute, is love, prompting him, as moral governor, to seek the good of his dominions, by rewarding the obedient and punishing the disobedient, and each according to the measure of his deservings. And mercy is love, prompting him (so far as with safety and propriety it can be done) to remit the stern claims of justice, and treat his guilty creatures better than they deserve. And God's truth, considered as an attribute, is love, prompting him to conform all his declarations and representations to the exact reality of things. And faithfulness is love, prompting him to accomplish his promises, and execute his threatenings, and fulfil all the reasonable expectations of his people. And so of every other moral attribute or perfection which goes to constitute the holy character of God. Love, benevolence, enters

into and forms the basis of them all. Love is that essential ingredient, that "bond of perfectness," by which all are assimilated and united; so that, in setting forth the moral excellence of the Deity, we have only to say, in the brief and expressive language of the text, that "God is love."

It is thought by many, that this declaration is inconsistent with the leading features of the orthodox theology. Orthodoxy, it is said, represents the Divine Being as arbitrary, partial, capricious, cruel; doing his own pleasure, without regard to the happiness of his creatures; requiring beyond what they are able to perform, and punishing them out of all proportion to their deserts. Accordingly we find the declaration in the text a favourite one with *liberal* religionists of every description. They have it inscribed on their pulpits, their churches, the covers of their Bibles, and I had almost said, on the borders of their garments.

Such being the case, it is important that I proceed to show,

II. That no one of the peculiar principles of orthodoxy is at all inconsistent with the Divine benevolence, or with the declaration that God is love. I say the *peculiar* principles of orthodoxy; for to go into a consideration of difficulties, which lie no more against orthodoxy than against every other system of religion which acknowledges the being and the government of God—such, for example, as those growing out of the existence and the prevalence of sin and misery—would lead to a wider field of discussion than we have now the opportunity to enter.

The principles of orthodoxy most commonly supposed to contravene the Divine benevolence, are those of Divine Sovereignty, of total depravity, of atonement, of election and reprobation, and of eternal punishment. Let us proceed, then, to an examination of each of these doctrines, with a view to show its consistency with the declaration that *God is love*. And,

1. The doctrine of *Divine Sovereignty*. What is the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty? This inquiry is the more important, because the subject is so frequently misunderstood. There are those who *will* have it, that the sovereignty of God is an arbitrary sovereignty, and who, whenever he is represented to them as a sovereign, can only think of him as a cruel and capricious being. What, then, is the proper Christian doctrine of Divine Sovereignty? It was well expressed by Nebuchadnezzar, that old monarch of Babylon, after the recovery of his reason, and after what I hope, was his conversion: "He doeth according to his will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" In fewer words, the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty is simply this: *God does as he pleases*. "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he hath compassion on whom he will have compassion." His "counsel shall stand, and he will

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do all his pleasure." Everywhere, and at all times, *God does as he pleases.* But what does God please to do? This is a very important inquiry. Does he please to act unreasonably, arbitrarily, capriciously, cruelly? If this be true, then is he, indeed, an arbitrary and capricious sovereign. But is this true? Does any believer in Divine Sovereignty so regard it? God does as he pleases; but *he pleases to do for ever right.* He pleases to act, perpetually and universally, from the best reasons, according to the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness. His pleasure, therefore, is but another name for *goodness, benevolence;* and the doing of his pleasure, or in other words, his *sovereignty* is but the acting out of love. In this view—which is the view taken by all orthodox Christians—there can be no inconsistency or discrepancy between the love and the sovereignty of God. The two doctrines perfectly harmonize; the love of God being the grand motive, the mainspring of sovereignty, and sovereignty being but the acting forth of love.

We come, then, to the second doctrine mentioned; I mean that of *total depravity.* Total depravity is rather an ambiguous phrase. To many it is an odious phrase. It is not a favourite one with me; and yet, when properly explained, it expresses a great and important truth—a fundamental article of the Christian religion. Total depravity is but another name for *entire sinfulness.* It implies, not that the subject of it is as bad as he can be, or that he is necessarily vicious, or that he is destitute of all amiable, natural, and social qualities; but that he is destitute of that "*holiness* without which no man can see the Lord;" and that all his moral exercises and affections are sinful. And such, the Scriptures assure us, is the state of the natural unrenewed man, everywhere. His heart is "full of evil," and "fully set in him to do evil." "Every imagination and thought of his heart are only evil, and that continually." In him—that is, in his flesh, "there dwelleth no good thing." Nor is this alarming fact at all inconsistent with the Divine benevolence. I assume here, what all respectable religionists admit, that the existence of sin, and consequently of sinners, is somehow consistent with the Divine benevolence. But if it is not inconsistent with God's goodness that there should be sinners in the world, no more is it that there should be *great* sinners, even totally depraved and corrupted sinners. A good being may have enemies, bitter, determined, enemies. Our Lord Jesus Christ was goodness itself: yet how many hated him without a cause, and persecuted him even unto death! So God may have enemies of the most malign and depraved character, and yet be the perfection of goodness. If it is not inconsistent with God's goodness, that men should sin against him some, no more is it that they should sin *all*—that they should make themselves *entirely* sinful—that they should become totally

corrupted and depraved. God's goodness is not impeached or diminished by men's wickedness. How can it be? He is not the perpetrator of it. He has had no concern with it, except to detest it; to do all he consistently can do to deliver them from it; and where (without too great a sacrifice) this cannot be done, to overrule it for a greater good.

The third doctrine is that of *atonement* by the death and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apparent inconsistency between this doctrine and that of the text, lies in God's causing an innocent person to suffer in place of the guilty; or, to use the language of the prophet, in his laying on his own Son "the iniquities of us all." And I freely acknowledge, that if the Son of God had been caused to suffer *against his will*, or *without his own free and full consent*, the difficulty presented would be insuperable. The atonement would become an act of injustice, of cruelty. But the sufferings of Christ were *not* laid upon him against his will. He was throughout a voluntary, consenting sufferer. When the time had arrived for his appearance on the earth, he is represented as saying, with the greatest promptness, "Lo, I come!" And while here in the flesh, and in the near prospect of his approaching sufferings, he said: "No man taketh my life from me, but *I lay it down of myself*. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." In this veiw, the whole aspect and character of our Saviour's sufferings are entirely changed. He had a right to interpose for the salvation of sinners, if he pleased; and if *he* was willing to make the sacrifice, there was no injustice or cruelty, on the part of the Father, in suffering him to do it. So far from this, there was an exhibition here made of goodness, of mercy, of abounding grace, such as the universe never witnessed. Intsead of being inconsistent with the love of God, the atonement was a most astonishing fruit and manifestation of love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

I remark again, that the Christian doctrine of *election* is not at all inconsistent with the declaration that "God is love." I say the *Christian* doctrine of election; for no one, with the Bible before him, can doubt that this is a Christian doctrine. There is as much evidence of it, in the Scriptures, as there is of the doctrines of depravity, of the atonement, or of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. But what is this so much perverted, and by many detested, doctrine of election? It supposes, first of all (what is certainly true), that the entire race of man is already in a fallen, ruined state, sinners against God, and deserving to be cast off for ever; and it represents the great Sovereign of heaven as resolving, out of mere mercy, and from all eternity, to interpose and save a part of them. It supposes that, in determin-

ing what part to save, he acted, not from partiality, or envy, or caprice, but from the best of reasons—the promptings of infinite wisdom and love. It further teaches, that though foreseen goodness in the elect was not the ground of their election, yet holy character entered into it, and made an essential part of it. God saves all those, and only those, who love and obey him; and this he purposed to do before the world began. Such is, in brief, the doctrine of election, as held by orthodox ministers and Christians. And now I ask: Is there aught in it inconsistent with the Divine benevolence, or contradictory to the idea that "God is love?" God might have left the entire race of rebel men, as he did the rebel angels, to the dreadful consequences of their own sin; but in his boundless compassion, he resolved to interpose, and rescue a part of them. He determined to provide an all-sufficient Saviour, and an almighty sanctifier, and exert, his saving power, till infinite wisdom and goodness should say, *It is enough.* He determined to save all those who would come to Christ, put their trust in him, and obey and follow him. And was not this determination on the part of heaven a most gracious and merciful one? So far from being inconsistent with the Divine benevolence, is it not a fruit, a manifestation of that benevolence, sufficient to fill our hearts with rejoicing, and our lips with praise?

I proceed now to remark, that there is nothing in the kindred doctrine of *reprobation,* as understood by orthodox Christians, which is inconsistent with the Divine goodness. Against the doctrine of reprobation, there are even stronger prejudices on the part of some, than against that of election. It is also a doctrine, like that of election, which is often misrepresented and perverted. It is important to inquire, therefore, first of all, *what is the doctrine of reprobation?* What does it suppose? What inculcate? It supposes, like election, that the whole family of man is in a guilty, ruined state, deserving to suffer the full penalty of the law, which is eternal death; but that God, in mercy, has provided a Saviour, and has determined to save vast numbers of them from the impending wrath. He has determined to save all who can consistently be saved—all who will come to Christ, and put their trust in him. And what is he to do with the rest—with those who reject Christ, and will not come to him that they might have life? These he has determined to treat, not harshly or cruelly, but ultimately as they deserve. He has purposed to leave them to the just and terrible consequences of their own sin. In the language of Scripture, he "*gives them up* unto their own hearts' lusts." "He *gives them over to a reprobate mind.*" He "*suffers*" them to walk in their own way,"* and this he *purposed* to do from all eternity. Such, then, is the doctrine of reprobation; and

* Ps. 81: 12. Rom. 1: 28. Acts 14: 16.

hat is there in it I ask, which is at all inconsistent with the ivine benevolence? It is not inconsistent with benevolence r God to provide a Saviour for lost and guilty men; to fer them salvation on easy terms; and to resolve to save all ose of them who will embrace his offers. And is it inconsisnt with benevolence for him to *abandon* the rest to "*give em over* to a reprobate mind"—to leave them to their own osen way? He does not compel or constrain them to sin. He oes not visit them with unmerited punishments. But as they ray to be excused from gospel provisions and blessedness, he ays in righteous judgment, *Be excused.* As they reject the aviour, and turn away from him in pride and scorn, he leaves em to their own chosen way. And so it was his purpose to eat them before the world began. They "were before of old rdained to condemnation." Jude 4.

Perhaps some will say: "This is a very different view of the octrine of election and reprobation, from what we have been acustomed to entertain. We have supposed these doctrines to imly, that by an arbitrary decree, God destines some of the human amily to salvation, and others to destruction, without regard to heir characters or deserts; rendering it absolutely impossible for he former class to fail of heaven, or for the latter to reach it." In regard to such representations of these doctrines (and they are ery common) I only say, that I am in no way responsible for em. I do not hold or defend them; nor do I know of an rthodox man in the world that does. Thus represented, or rather misrepresented, doubtless the doctrines in question *are* inconsistent ith the Divine benevolence; as they certainly are without reason, nd the word of God. But understood as above presented, howver briefly and imperfectly, they seem to me to accord entirely ith the declaration, that *God is love.*

I have only to add, that the doctrine of *eternal punishment* is lso in harmony with this declaration. To illustrate this, it is nly necessary to take into consideration the nature of God's overnment, and the relations subsisting between himself and his ntelligent creatures. He has made them what they are,—accounta-le beings, free moral agents, proper subjects of law and governnent; and he has undertaken to administer a moral government ver them. He has given them a perfectly good law to be the ule of their actions, requiring them to love him with all the heart, nd to love one another as they love themselves. To those who bey this law, he has promised everything desirable and glorious y way of reward; while against those who transgress it, he has enounced a terrible but a just punishment. Is there anything nconsistent with goodness, *thus far,* in the administration of God owards his creatures? Surely, it was good in him to make them hat they are —rational, accountable, immortal beings. It was

good in him to give them such a holy law; and to guard it with such righteous sanctions; and to institute for them, and over them, such a perfect moral government. And if it was good in God to *institute* such a government, must it not be equally good to maintain it? To abandon it, now that he has set it up, would be the extreme of weakness and folly. But how is a government of law to be maintained, unless the laws are faithfully executed? Let any sovereign begin to trifle with his law,—to enact beyond it, or to fall below it; to withhold its rewards when merited, or to remit its penalties when incurred; and how long can such a government be respected? How long can it stand? I repeat, if it was good in the Supreme Being to *institute* a moral government over his creatures, it must be good in him to *maintain* it; and this can be done only by a faithful execution of law. The law must be honoured; it must be executed; the obedient must be rewarded; the disobedient must be punished; not one jot or tittle must be suffered to pass from the law; or a government of law *cannot be maintained.*

In this view, any government is just as benevolent in inflicting deserved punishments, as it is in bestowing merited rewards. Our own government is as benevolent in erecting prisons, as in erecting school-houses. It is as benevolent in confining thieves and hanging murderers, as it is in bestowing offices and honours. And the Divine government is as benevolent in shutting up the wicked in the prison of hell, as in receiving the righteous to the joys of heaven. The one is as consistent with love, and is as much the fruit of love—love, in the largest and best sense of term, as the other.

There is another consideration to be taken into the account, touching not only the justice, but the *benevolence* of the Divine punishments. At an infinite expense, God has opened a way in which sinners of our race may be pardoned and saved. In the fulness of his compassion, he has provided for them a Saviour, and is offering them salvation on the freest terms. A portion of them accede to his offers, and receive the blessings of pardon and eternal life. But others turn away in pride and scorn, and pertinaciously refuse the promised grace. They will not come to the Saviour, that they might have life. And now what shall God do with such contemners of his law, and despisers of his grace, but to punish them as they deserve? And when he does punish them as they deserve, shall they rise up and impeach his goodness, and charge him with delighting in their blood? O no! Their enlightened consciences, in that day, will not suffer them to utter such a change. And the conscience of the universe will not endure to hear it. As the smoke of the wicked ascends up, a broad and black column, for ever and ever, there will be inscribed on that column, in burning capitals, not only "that God is a consuming fire," but that "God is love."

1. In remarking on the subject which has been before us, we see the importance of a right understanding of the declaration in the text. As observed already, this is a favourite passage with the liberal religionists of almost every description. No part of Scripture is so continually quoted and referred to, as this. And no part of Scripture, you will allow me to say, is so continually perverted and misapplied. The love which many ascribe to God, is entirely inconsistent with his justice, or with any proper regard for his own authority, and the honours of his law. He cannot punish the guilty as they deserve—he cannot even provide a *place* of punishment; for *he is love!* His justice must for ever sleep, and his enemies must be controlled by other means, or not at all; for *he is love!*

The love here ascribed to God is obviously a *partial* and *childish* affection. It is a love for his *creatures*, to the neglect of himself. It is a love for a *part* of his creatures, to the neglect of the rest. It is a love for the *worst* part of them, to the neglect of the better part. God loves the impenitent, the incorrigible, the abandoned, so well, that he cannot bear to punish them; and so he suffers them to go on, trampling on his authority, casting dishonour on his name, and disturbing and corrupting the other portions of his dominions, till he has forfeited all respect as a sovereign, and his righteous government is overthrown. Such would be the love of a father for his rebellious children, prompting him to continued indulgence, and forbidding him to restrain and punish till the order of his house was entirely subverted, and himself, his wife, and all the obedient part of his family were literally turned out of doors. Such would be the love of a monarch for traitors and murderers, prompting him to weep and expostulate, when he ought to punish, while every public interest was endangered, and property and life were wantonly thrown away. It is amazing to see the delusion extensively prevailing among sensible people, in relation to this subject. They persist in ascribing a kind of love to the Supreme Being, which is inconsistent with all government; in the indulgence of which not an earthly kingdom under heaven, not a family even or a common school could be effectually governed for a single month.

2. The foregoing discussion is adapted to remove one of the principal objections to the orthodox faith. The more common objections to orthodoxy are drawn, not so much from the Bible, as from its alleged inconsistency with the goodness, the benevolence of God. There is an impression on the minds of people generally, even the worst people, that the Bible, in its more obvious meaning, does inculcate the orthodox doctrines. This certainly is the opinion of infidels, rationalists, and those who have cast off the authority of the Bible, almost without an exception. But these doctrines are inconsistent with the moral perfections of Jehovah,

more especially with his goodness, and consequently cannot be true. And hence the Bible, which seems to favour them, must be either rejected or explained away. But we have seen in this discourse, that between the orthodox doctrines, rightly stated and explained, and the Divine goodness, there is no discrepancy. These doctrines are but the outbeamings, the manifestations of the Divine goodness, and cannot be inconsistent with it. They harmonize as naturally and as closely with the benevolence of God, as they do with his word; and all objection to them, drawn from the source we are now considering, is without foundation.

3. The character of God, as presented in this discourse, is one infinitely desirable and glorious. The glory of God consists essentially in his goodness. When Moses prayed that God would show him his glory, the answer was: "I will make all my *goodness* to pass before thee;" implying that his goodness and his glory were identical; or at least that the former was essential to the latter. And is not this obviously true? To realize the truth of it, we have only to form a conception of God, as divested of his goodness. Conceive, if you can, of omniscience, and omnipotence, and omnipresence, all under the direction of infinite malice and selfishness; and would there be any glory in such a being? So far from this, would he not be the most hateful and terrible being in the universe—a being from whom no creature could hide, but from whom every creature would desire to flee away? But when we have invested God, as the Scriptures do, with his adorable *natural* perfections, and placed them all under the direction and promptings of infinite goodness; when we contemplate his whole moral character as comprised in benevolence; what character can possibly be more desirable or glorious? What being can be more worthy of our supreme affection, our highest confidence, our devoutest aspirations of love and praise? With infinite wisdom to direct, and infinite goodness to prompt, and almighty power to execute; what can possibly be added to such a character, to render it more complete and perfect? What glorious attribute can be conceived of as existing in any character, which we do not find in the Divine character to perfection? Who would not love such a character as this? And what shall be thought of a race of creatures, of whom the pen of inspiration has recorded, "They do not like to retain God in their knowledge,"—the language of whose hearts towards God is, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways?"

4. It follows from what has been said, that God is a *perfectly happy being*. The Scriptures have much to say of the *blessedness* of God. He is "the blessed and only Potentate." He "is over all, God blessed for ever." And from the

view we have taken of the Divine character, it follows that he *must* be blessed. He has infinite sources of blessedness within himself. "He is good, and he doeth good." He knows that his character is one of infinite, unspotted, and unchangeable goodness; and the consciousness of this is a source of happiness to him, of which no other being in the universe can form any conception.

God knows, too, that in eternity he formed the best and wisest plan of providence—a plan susceptible of no improvement, and needing no change; and he has the satisfaction of seeing this great and glorious plan going into complete effect. No enemy can ever thwart or defeat it. No unforeseen casualty can arise to interrupt it. God's "counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure." He worketh all things in providence after the counsel of his own blessed will. Evils, to be sure, exist under the government of God, which his benevolent heart cannot contemplate without grief; but as these evils are every one of them incidental, in some way, to the greatest possible good, and are suffered to exist because of that good; so the grief which God feels in view of them is but incidental—incidental, in some way, to his own highest happiness. What I mean to say is, that God is happier, on the whole, with them, than he could be without them; happier in the existing order of things, notwithstanding its incidental evils, than he could be in any other; because he knows that the present plan of providence is, on the whole, *the best*,—the most glorious to himself, and the most blessed and happy for the universe. He has, therefore, an infinite satisfaction in it, as a whole; and while he sees the great wheel of his providence rolling on in its appointed course, and everything taking place, in this world and in all worlds, according to the counsels of his blessed will, he is supremely and for ever happy. On this ground, it is easy to vindicate the everlasting blessedness of the Supreme Being. But on no other ground, of which I have any knowledge, is such a vindication possible.

5. It results from the principles which have been established, that it is an unspeakable privilege to live under the government of God. There are multitudes, I know, both in this world and in other worlds, who do not thus regard it. They resist and oppose the government of God. The language of their hearts is: "We do not like to retain God in our knowledge. Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us." But this strange and unnatural rebellion against the government of God is no evidence of its inperfection, and no proof that it is not a privilege—an unspeakable privilege—to live under it. Is it not a privilege to be the child of a great, and wise, and good parent here on the earth, one who protects and controls his household faithfully, and orders all their affairs with kindness and discretion?

Is it not a privilege to live under a good government in *this world*, one that is wisely constituted, and faithfully admonished, where the interests of the subjects are protected and promoted, and all the ends of government are secured? And, though some of the subjects may be displeased with such a government, and may try to overthrow it, is this any valid argument against it? But if it is a privilege to be subject to a good father on earth, how much more to have an infinitely better Father in heaven? If it is a privilege to be blessed with a good government here, how much more to be under a *perfect* government, and the only perfect government in the universe? What a privilege unspeakable, to have our life and breath, our powers and faculties, our friends, our interests, and all our destinies, in the hands of One, who can make no mistakes, who can do no wrong thing, who will be sure to order everything in wisdom and in goodness, and whose benevolent designs no enemy can ever interrupt or defeat? This privilege, my friends, is ours; and it is our own fault if we do not know it, and rejoice in it. It is our own fault if this thought is not to each one of us, under all circumstances, whether of light or darkness, prosperity or adversity, joy or sorrow, a source of unspeakable and everlasting consolation.

6. If what has been said is true, then *to oppose God*, in any form—to hate his character, resist his government and transgress his laws, must be most unreasonable and dreadful.—Why should any moral, intelligent being be displeased with the *character* of God? Is it not a holy character? Is it not a perfect character? We have seen that it is all comprised in love; that it is a character of infinite and unchangeable goodness. To hate it is, therefore, to hate goodness itself. It is to be displeased with that, which is the perfection of moral excellence and glory.

And why should any rise up against the *government* of God? Has he not a *right* to reign? Are we not absolutely *his* creatures, and has he not a right to do what he will with his own? And is not his government wise and good? In all its departments, is it it not characterized by *infinite* wisdom, and *infinite* goodness, and infinite and absolute perfection?

And then as to the *law* of God; is it not a perfectly *good* law? It is all comprised in *love;* supreme love to God, and impartial love to the creatures of God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." Now who can urge the slightest objection against such a law as this; or assign any good reason why he should not obey it?

And not only is opposition to God, in every form which it ever assumes, in the highest degree unreasonable, it is also *dreadful*—dreadful, I mean, in its bearing on those who persist in it. In the course they are pursuing, the incorrigible enemie

of God have absolutely nothing to hope for, but everything to fear. They sometimes hope in the *goodness* of God; but his very goodness will arm his power against them. They have really more to fear from God, than though he was not good. For if God was not good, his enemies might have some reason on their side, and some ground of hope in their opposition; but now no such hope remains. Besides, if God was not good, he might peradventure be swayed from the path of right, and be induced to favour them in their wicked designs; but such a ground of hope is now impossible. The holiness, the goodness, the perfection of the Supreme Being, connected with his obligations as a Sovereign, bind him to pursue the workers of iniquity with a steady hand, and to overwhelm them—unless they repent—with an utter and an endless ruin. Let, then, the impenitent and the ungodly take warning. Let them not further presume upon the goodness, the patience, the forbearance of Jehovah. Let them not dare the Almighty to the conflict, and venture "upon the thick bosses of his buckler."

The character of God, as it has been here exhibited, is calculated to give us the most exalted conceptions of heaven. For heaven is the very *metropolis* of God's unbounded empire; the palace, the presence-chamber of the great King.

God is no more *really* present in heaven, than he is on earth, or in any other place or world; but he is more *sensibly* present. It is there that he *manifests* himself most peculiarly and graciously. It is there, in a special manner, that he shows forth his glory. And it is this that *endears* heaven to all its blissful and glorified inhabitants. It is this, in fact, which *constitutes* heaven. The language of every heart in that upper world is that of the devoted Psalmist: "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" "In *thy presence* is fulness of joy, and at *thy right hand* are pleasures for evermore."

"Not all the harps above
Can make a heavenly place,
If *God* his residence remove,
Or but conceal his face."

But from the glorified inhabitants of heaven, God never does conceal his face for a moment. For the trial of his people, he sometimes hides his face from them in this world, but never in heaven. His presence and his glory beam forth there—a sun without any dark spots—one clear, unclouded, and eternal day, and all his people rejoice in him, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

My beloved hearers, are we prepared to go there? Are we prepared, in the spirit and temper of our minds, to participate in those heavenly joys? Has the love of God been shed abroad

in our hearts? Do we delight in his character, and rejoice in his government, and endeavour to do the things that please him, here on the earth? Is it the language of our hearts even here, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" "Lord, lift thou upon me the light of thy countenance?" In short, has heaven *begun* with us here below? It must be *begun* here, in order to be consummated there. It must be *begun* here, or never. Let no one who hears me be deceived. Let no one trust to an *unfounded* hope, or consent to live *without* hope and without God in the world.

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RELIGIOUS DECISION.

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.—Psalms, 57, 7.

Such was the impassioned exclamation of David; and it should be the language of every regenerated soul. Every professing Christian should have the same deliberate firm, purpose. No one pretending to be on the Lord's side should doubt whether he is there, or give others reason to suppose that he has a divided mind. Having clearly apprehended duty, he should come to a full, unshaken decision to do it. On this point, there should be no hesitancy; it should be settled for ever. Adopting the exclamation of the Psalmist as his own, he should say—"My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed."

Religious Decision,—this is our subject: which will be presented under two inquiries.

I. On what was David's heart fixed?

II. Why should ours be thus fixed?

I. On what was David's heart fixed?

1. It was fixed on the supreme choice of God and his service.

Mankind, at their introduction into existence, are presented with two distinct objects of choice. Their Creator and the world, both solicit their affections. To one or the other of these, the heart is freely given. It is impossible that the heart should be given to both. There is but one commanding, supreme choice of the soul. There is but one throne in the heart, and the Most High and the world cannot both be upon it. David, though he, in common with his fallen race, naturally chose the world at first, afterwards under

the influence of the Divine Spirit, centred his affections upon Jehovah. Submitting to God, he gave himself up to God, and taking the attitude of a willing and obedient child, gave him his love, his talents, and his service. He took Jehovah for his portion,—as the alone, proper, and satisfying rest for his soul. "I trust in thee"—is his confession: "there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee. Thou art my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my God, in whom I will trust, my buckler, the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and hate every false way."

2. It was fixed, further, on the diligent study of the holy oracles of God.

He was ardently attached to the inspired volume. He drank freely from this celestial fountain, and drew copiously from these heavenly stores. In the historical, doctrinal, preceptive, and prophetic portions, there were charms for his pious mind. It guided him in difficulty—illuminating his path; it consoled him in affliction; it animated him to do and to suffer. On the perfections of the glorious Being it revealed, he dwelt with fondness, and on the bright predictions of the Lamb of God to be slain, his eye kindling with hope, delighted to linger. Banqueting on the sacred Word, he exclaimed—"it is sweet to my taste, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth. Oh how love I thy law! it is sweeter to my taste than honey and the honey-comb. More precious is it to me than gold, yea, than much fine gold." So keen was David's relish for the Bible—so fixed his heart on heavenly truth.

3. It was fixed, also, on the settled purpose, frequently and fervently to pray to God.

He prized the throne of Grace, and came often to it. It was his pleasure there to supplicate the Spirit to pour light into the dark chambers of his mind. Alone in communion with God—in retirement bending the knee before the King of Kings—he ingenuously confessed his transgressions, sought sanctification, and in penitence, humility, and faith, cast himself on the All-supporting Arm. "Awake," he exclaimed, "I myself will awake early for devotion. Morning, evening, and at noon, seven times a day will I call upon thee." When beset with temptations, when harrassed by perplexities, when visited with trying providences—on all occasions, in health and sickness, prosperity and adversity, he poured out his soul to the Author and Preserver of his being.

4. It was fixed, likewise, on the firm intention to bring the lost children of men to love and trust in God.

He longed to deliver men from the iron, merciless fetters of Satan, and introduce them into the glorious liberty of Jehovah's children. To this end he praised God that they might love Him: to this end, he set forth the Lord's kindness, that they might trust Him: to this end he exhibited the confusion and anguish which

would come upon workers of iniquity, that they might fear to sin: and thus he counselled and warned the impenitent earnestly, affectionately, and thoroughly.

5. It was fixed, indeed, on the purpose in every possible way, to further the interests of Christ's Kingdom.

It was his fervent desire, his constant, unwearied study, to promote and diffuse piety. Regarding himself, not as the proprietor of the manifold grace of God, but an obliged, highly-favored recipient of the same, he did what he could to dispense it to others. As God had given him all things richly to enjoy, he aimed to be almoner of these blessings, glorify God, and become the honored instrument of advancing his cause. He made it no secret that he had espoused the service of the Most High; he subjected himself to ridicule and rage because of this his profession; in his daily deportment, before his subjects, he exemplified religion in its purity and power, and longed to erect a temple for the worship of Jehovah.

On such objects was the heart of the Psalmist fixed. In other words, he was decided in religion. He surrendered himself to the Lord—not in a compromising spirit—but with a settled purpose to lead a Christian life, and render to Him a full and faithful service.

II. Why should our hearts be thus fixed? or why should we aim at the same elevated standard of piety?

1. We should be thus decided, and our heart thus fixed, because of the degrading character of indecision. There is something positively disgraceful, in a wavering, vacillating state of mind. It becomes a rational, intelligent being to investigate principles and ascertain what is right. It becomes him to compare the right and wrong, the advantages and disadvantages of different courses of action, and then, distinctly expressing a preference of one over other, to act accordingly. There is something in our nature which leads us to disrespect the man who has no judgment of his own, who is blown about by every wind, and turned from his course by every opposing current. The man on no side in politics and morals, has usually many sides—which fact is anything but creditable to him. But on the subject of religion, indecision is especially disgraceful. Disgraceful is it for all; for reason, revelation and comfort, demand of every rational being to decide for his Maker, or against Him. But for a professing Christian—one who pretends to be on the Lord's side and engaged in his service, to know not where he actually is—to be drawn in opposite directions—now here and now there—to be vacillating between God and mammon, heaven and the world, is signally dishonorable. Having looked at Jehovah and Satan, and compared their respective merits, having contrasted the narrow path of safety and glory, with the broad road of transgression and death, and having avouched God to be his God,

and the way of duty and life, the way in which his feet are planted, —nothing should turn him aside; lukewarmness and hesitancy should for ever vanish, and he should exclaim with the Psalmist— "my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed."

2. Our heart should be thus fixed, because this is the great object for which we were sent into the world.

For what end was this planet spoke into being? Why was this round earth, with its spreading valleys, towering mountains, and majestic oceans first "hung upon nothing," and now kept there? What, but that it might be the habitation of an order of creatures who should be the declared, and the actual, determined friends of the Lord of Hosts? For this end was it made, and for this express purpose was existence given us. We were placed here, subjects of moral government, to decide whether we would renounce the authority of Jehovah, or submit to it—whether we would give him our affections, or place them elsewhere—whether we would bestow upon him our influence and services, or not. We were placed here to take sides, to dispose of our hearts, to embrace that Being who can be with us through life and death, and immortality. Shall then no decision be made, and the high end of our being set at nought? Shall that momentous question be kept open, which existence was given us to decide? No: whatever else is put off, in whatever other matters we remain hesitating, it should not be as to whom we will bow—to whom we will cling, and whom we will obey. On this point we should be immediately and unalterably committed—saying "my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed."

3. Another reason why we should be steadfast and immovable in religious duty is, that all the obstacles in the path of duty, were distinctly foreseen when the obligation to a fixed performance of duty was laid upon us.

When Jehovah wrote the law of supreme love to Himself, and impartial love to man, which comprehends our every duty—when he wrote this with his burning finger on Sinai's summit, all the opposing obstacles to the keeping of that law in all its particulars, lay as in sunbeams before his eye. These foreseen obstacles, however great and formidable though they might have been, did not prevent him from making just such a law as he did, nor from binding us, one and all, rigidly to keep it. In view of every situation in life, every variety of circumstances, everything which has a tendency to draw down the affections of men from himself, or cause them to be cold and inconstant in his service, he demands the stability of godliness. Knowing what was in man, he knew, indeed, the weakness of human nature; but he knew also its strength. Above all, he knew the strength which he could and would impart to a steadfast, heroic disciple.

4. The Christian's heart should be thus fixed, because there is

no reason why it should *not* be thus fixed. His foundation is sure. He is not following cunningly devised fables. There is a God. "There is a book which he has writ to teach us all what we must do." The Creator of the world has been upon it in the form of a servant, that its inhabitants may mount up among Cherubim and Seraphim. The Ancient of Days has been cradled as an infant of days, that immortal man may, through a boundless eternity, climb the regions of light and life. Man has a soul in which infinite treasure is garnered up. It could not be properly exchanged for the universe, though every planet was gold, and every star a ruby. There is a heaven of exhaustless glory. There is a hell of insufferable anguish. There are solemn verities—unchangeable realities. He who believes this, believes what is true, and only what is true; and if such a belief is influential, it is but what might be expected.

Nor has the Christian anything to conceal. He has no reason to conceal the fact that he loves the greatest and the best of beings; or, that holiness is preferable to sin; or, that he wishes to possess the temper of the Lord Jesus; or, that while others are reclining in the lap of luxurious enjoyment, or panting after fading honors, or crossing seas in quest of perishable wealth, he wishes to subdue his wayward, depraved passions, become like God, serve him, and dwell for ever with him. There is nothing in either the sentiments of the Christian, his purposes, or hopes, to in the least dissuade him from saying, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed." The moon riding high in the heavens—the sun blazing at its meridian, have nothing to be ashamed of—and just as little has the Christian.

5. His heart should be thus fixed, because there is everything in the responsible profession he has made, calculated to fix it.

He professes to have experienced a spiritual change which is deep and thorough. This change, going down into the depths of his moral being—revolutionizing his volitions and desires—causing "old things to pass away, and all things to become new," may reasonably be expected to exhibit itself in the life. The Christian may properly be expected to show his principles, and act consistently with them. The Gospel is decisive in its tones, and should produce marked decisive effects. None should be in danger of mistaking his character, who professes, under the energy of divine truth wielded by the Spirit, to be born again. There should be that conscientious regard for God—that subjugation of evil passions—that unbending integrity—that solicitude for sinful, dying men—that grappling with the powers of darkness and organized wickedness—in a word, that discharge of the duties of active piety, which, manifesting itself at home, and abroad, everywhere—will cause it to be read as in letters of light, that there is a radical and permanent distinction between him and others—that he has a re-

generated heart, and that that heart is fixed—anchored in truth and righteousness.

6. Our heart should be thus fixed, because, otherwise we shall never accomplish any great good.

The man who accomplishes much in anything is not the fickle, unstable man. It is the man of settled views—the man who has some definite purpose, and moves uniformly and steadily onward. Obstacles give way before such a man. Mountains which obstruct the progress of others, dissolve and flow down before his march.

Look at the individual who has yielded his heart and life to the influence of some mighty principle, and how he triumphs! How his energies tell! Hence, the most estimable characters—the most signal benefactors of their species have been distinguished for their decision. Such was the spirit of an Esther, who, moved by the sacred promptings of humanity went in unto King Ahasuerus, though in opposition to the laws of the realm, exclaiming—"if I perish, I perish." Such was the spirit of a Nehemiah; who, while discharging his duty, and in danger of the sword of the assassin, being advised to take refuge in the temple, heroically replied—"should such a man as I flee? and who is there that being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in." Such was the spirit of the three Hebrew captives; who when commanded to bow down before the golden image set up in the plain of Dura, or be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace, undauntedly told the impious monarch, "Our God, whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King; but if not, be it known unto thee O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Such was the spirit of a Daniel, who, when he knew that the imperial edict had gone forth, and the document was written and sealed, consigning him to a den of lions, if he prayed to the God of his nation; nevertheless, went to his dwelling and his chamber, and there with his windows open towards Jerusalem, the seat of his father's sepulchre, "kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before Jehovah, as he did aforetime." Such a one was the Savior. His entire life was one bright exhibition of unshrinking fidelity to God, and the cause which he had espoused. His "heart was fixed." He laid his course, and was not blown from it. Temptations and trials, Scribes and Pharisees, and Priests moved him not. He came to establish a pure religion, and declared that he did, and boldly prosecuted his errand in defiance of threats and suffering. He rebuked sin, humbled pride, charged home guilt in the ears of an irritated multitude, and cleared his Father's temple of money-changers. Such men were the apostles, Peter and John, who, when threatened with imprisonment and death, if they spake at all or taught in the name of Jesus, an-

swered—"Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Such a man was the apostle Paul, who, when his friends would dissuade him from going to Jerusalem, because certain that bonds and afflictions there awaited him, replied—"What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Such a man was Chrysostom, who, when menaced by Eudoxia the empress, said—"Go tell her I fear nothing but sin." Such a man was Luther. "I view," said he, "the will of the Emperor as expressive of the divine will, and I will go to Worms, though I should encounter as many devils there, as there are tiles upon the houses." Such a one was John Knox, whom the tears and beauty of Queen Mary could not subdue, nor her denunciations terrify; and over whom, as he lay in his coffin, Morton, the regent truly remarked—"There lies one who never feared the face of man." And thus the aged Eleazer, when tormented that he might abjure his religion, "Prepare your instruments of torture," said the venerable man; "kindle your flames to a fiercer rage; I stand without fear amidst your frightful engines and implements of martyrdom; I will not save these silver locks by violating the laws of my God!" here was moral intrepidity—religious decision. The hearts of these ones were fixed. They had not "the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a strong mind." Hence they achieved something. Hence the Savior "finished the work that was given him to do, and brought in everlasting righteousness." Hence Peter, John, and Paul, were the successful bearers of salvation. Hence the fame of Luther and Knox is now published louder than the thunders of the Vatican, and the names of the others live among the precious records of truth and piety. The useful Christian, he whom Jehovah selects to high achievements, is no trimmer, or temporizer, or unstable person. He shows his colors. Men see what and where he is. If an action is right he does it. If it is wrong he does it not. He protests against it. Hence, the word Protestant—sainted name. Sneer you may, frown you may, threaten you may. It is all one to him. He stands immovable. His heart is fixed. God blesses such a man. His influence is felt, and will continue to be felt "till time shall be no longer—while immortality endures!"

7. Our heart should be fixed, because our happiness will thus be greatly promoted.

We are so constituted that decision in reference to any subject, is an agreeable state of mind. On the contrary, indecision is attended with pain. How frequently is the remark made, indicative of trouble—"I know not what to do, I know not which to choose!" The mind in such a state, drawn in opposite directions,

is in a state of distressing perplexity. Neutral ground is not solid ground, nor is it comfortable to stand upon. Like a Serbonian bog, it trembles beneath the tread. The heart must be fixed somewhere. Neither wholly for God nor against him, there is the disquiet of "a bird that has wandered from its nest." But he who has chosen God for his sovereign and portion, determined upon what is right, and unflinchingly pursues it, has a temper of mind calm and peaceful. There is no fluctuation of judgment, no conflicting feelings. His soul is at rest; his "heart is fixed." The wicked know what to expect of such a one, and after a trial of his integrity let him alone. They know that he will not violate his conscience nor tamper with sin, and that they might as well attempt to heave the eternal hills from their foundations, as to drive him from his steadfastness. Jehovah loves him and manifests himself graciously unto him. Faithful to his Maker, his Maker is faithful to him. Honoring God and God's word, holding affectionate intercourse with God, cherishing an invariable interest in the prosperity of His kingdom, governed not by maxims of worldly prudence, or considerations drawn from what is of earth earthy, Jehovah honors him. He sheds abroad in his heart, "peace passing all understanding," and gives to his Christian character a growing brightness. While "he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed;" and while "the wicked are as the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, the work of righteousness is peace and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."

Hence the words immediately following the exclamation of the text. "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed." What then? "I will sing and give praise." This settled state of mind brings with it rich delight. Moored to the throne of the Almighty, we catch there heavenly beams and breezes and sweep the strings of our harp. Standing on this empyreal eminence of devotion, far up towards heaven, light from that world of melody and joy comes free into our souls, and the storms of earth break harmless at our feet!

It is told of Isabella of Castille, that though she was some time agitating the question, whether to patronize Columbus or not, in his contemplated voyage of discovery; yet, that when she had once trusted to his reasonings, and had decided so to do, a glow of delight pervaded her soul and entering a cathedral, she engaged in holy praise to God, and called upon her subjects to unite in her thanksgiving. This joy was the joy of decision.

8. Our heart should be thus fixed, because religion is thus commanded and God glorified.

Nothing exhibits religion to such advantage as Christian decision. Let him who has espoused the Redeemer's cause be devoted to that cause,—let him say, "What more have I to do

with idols,"—let him fearlessly avow his principles and intrepidly support them, and glory is reflected from his consistent conduct upon his profession.

There is something in decision of character which commends itself, even when exerted in a bad cause. There is a sublimity, though it be a terrible sublimity, thrown around the man who is inflexible in his purposes, and moves on determinedly to their accomplishment, unattracted by smiles, and undaunted by frowns. We somehow respect Milton's Satan, though a desperate and abandoned fiend; and see something noble in Napoleon, quailing not before danger, and pushing steadily on his bloody conquests—a prodigy among warriors. Decision of character invests an unrighteous cause and clothes even a monster, a devil, with interest. How, then, does it commend and exalt when beheld in the Christian! To see one acting up to his profession in all circumstances; never turned aside from the path of rectitude by temptations, or taunts, or threatenings; bold in reproof, self-denying in illicit gratifications, uncompromising with sin and every evil way whether in theory or in practice; this is the moral sublime, the perfection of humanity, the investiture of it with angelic divine excellence! How is that religion honored which can take an apostate, fickle, depraved creature, and make such a character of him? And how does such a character, moving about in a corrupt world,

> ——"faithful among the faithless,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,"

glorify that Being whose precepts he practises, and to whose allegiance he has sworn! Strike out from the Bible the decision of Daniel, that of the three friends who entered courageously the furnace, and the long roll of apostles and martyrs who loved not their lives to the death, the death which lay at the end of the path of duty, and you blot out from the sacred page, glory of exceeding brightness.

9. Another motive for this fixedness of heart may be drawn from the peculiar features of the age in which we live. The cast of piety which suits this age, is not of the superficial passive kind. Our age has its own peculiarities, and such are these peculiarities, that it demands a high tone of christian principle and practical obedience.

A spirit of investigation is abroad. Men think for themselves, and act accordingly. The past has no authority over them, nor has the present, unless a reason, and an adequate reason, is assigned.

A spirit of innovation is abroad. Old land-marks are removed, new theories in politics and morals are broached. New plans set on foot. Men pant after novelties, and have a growing disrelish for what they have been long accustomed. Not only like the

Athenians, would they "hear or tell some new thing," but they would devise and adopt something new.

It is an age bold in sin. Infidelity open and disguised, is raging in various forms. Mighty engines of evil are at work. There is great intellectual power and cunning ingenuity, to which depravity gives direction and terrible success. Errorists are active, and contagious ones unwearied in their efforts to undermine and infect. What do such exigencies demand! Not a divided mind, a vacillating judgment, a meagre piety, hesitating, half-way Christians.

What is needed and imperiously called for, are disciples of the Lord Jesus, whose hearts are fixed, and whose piety is steadfast and unwavering. The soldiers of the Cross are to know their leader, have assured confidence in him, and be fully established and equipped. Like Great-Heart in Bunyan's Pilgrim, they should be girded in the inner and the outer man. Such are the ones, and the only ones, who, in the midst of tossings and tumults, will remain firm—who to temptations will be invulnerable—who will be elevated above worldly shifting principles—shrink not from encountering the scoffer; and such are the only ones who can break down the organized opposition to righteousness, and arrest the influences arrayed in hostility against God. And not only is decided piety demanded to raise barriers to evil, but a fixed spirit of holiness is required, as preparatory to that predicted millennial period which cannot now be remote. An age when missionaries are multiplying, steam-presses printing Bibles, Tracts, and religious books with almost inconceivable rapidity; when Popery is waning and decaying, Mahomedanism, as a political power, failing and passing away, every region of the globe, open or opening to the Gospel, and the spirit of the Lord moving upon the nations, as erst over the darkness of the primeval waters; the professed children of the Most High should be spiritual, decided, and intrepid. At such a moral crisis, their hearts, like David's, should be fixed—fixed in fighting the good fight of faith, in elevating the standard of piety, in gathering souls into the heavenly kingdom, in clothing, with increased efficiency, every benevolent enterprise; and in "giving Jehovah no rest, till the righteousness of Zion goes forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

10. We observe, once more, that such fixedness of heart will afford comfort in the evening of life, and triumph in the hour of death. If our lives are spared, we shall soon pass from the blossomings of youth, and the maturity of manhood, to "the sere and yellow leaf" of old age. When that time comes, the mind recurring to the past, will experience joy or sorrow, as we have or have not cleaved to heavenly principles, and developed them in our walk from day to day. If it can then be seen that we have

yielded a firm, faithful devotion to Jehovah, manifested the noble character of persons regenerate, held converse with heaven, and been satisfied with nothing less than blessing a world, how delightful will be such a retrospect—how ecstatic the joy which will possess the soul! But if, upon the evening of life, comes the melancholy reflection, that we have followed Christ, if at all, afar off,—that we have been spiritual cowards and sluggards, a scandal upon religion, we must hide our heads in shame. But whether advanced age is upon us or not, the sober honest hour of death is. Then, holy elevation of purpose and action will be all that will be accounted of any worth. Then, while he who is compelled to look back upon what he had not the virtue and courage to resist, condemns himself—then, while he who is compelled to look back upon a round of empty duties, and cold formalities, will be filled with darkness and dismal forebodings; the man of unbending religious principle, he who has regarded the voice of his King, reverenced His truth, and been religiously inflexible "through evil report and through good report," will have the overshadowings of the divine glory, and a voice from it, animating, enrapturing on the ears of his soul—"well done, good and faithful servant!"

Thus have our two interrogatories been answered:—

On what was the Psalmist's heart fixed?

Why should ours be thus fixed?

In conclusion, let us inquire: Are our hearts thus fixed? What reply, brethren, can you give? Have you, like David, an unyielding regard for the authority of Jehovah? Do you delight in His word and in communion with Him? Do you strive to bring others to a saving acquaintance with Him? Do you, irrespective of what the world think, say, or do, render Him a full and faithful service? Do you do this with a free, undivided heart? Is your heart fixed to do it? O, that we could all, O, that the present generation of Christians could say, yes. This is piety according to the scriptural standard. Possessed by every member of the Church, what a powerful testimony would be borne to the reality and beauty of religion! Then would "Zion look forth, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." O, when shall the time come, when all the professed disciples of Jesus, shall have this firm, noble, heroic fixedness of heart!

Again, let me ask, is it ours? If not, how much has been already lost? If, when we first hoped that we were the Lord's—first came to his table, we had thus fixed our hearts and kept them fixed until now, what heights in holiness should we have attained, how useful and honorable our career! Had we given ourselves up to him entirely, lived in an atmosphere of prayer, and fed upon the sacred page—if, instead of halting between the opposing attractions of earth and heaven, we had taken a decided stand for God, having no fellowship with the works of darkness, but reprov-

ing them and stamping them with infamy, many bulwarks of sin would have been demolished, and many, now wrapped in the slumbers of spiritual death, and wedded to iniquity, been enrolled among the subjects of Immanuel.

Let, then, the resolution now be made, in dependence on grace, that God shall indeed have our hearts from henceforth. Consider the motives to this end which have been offered. Let not our professions stand alone. Let them be joined to evangelical obedience. There are professions enough—let there be corresponding practice. Resolve, if there is a heaven, I will get to it; and, if possible, I will get others to it. While I live in this world, there shall be no doubt whose I am, and whom I serve. I will emulate the devotion of David. Like him, my heart shall be fixed—fixed to love my King, my Bible, and holiness—fixed to resist evil in high places and low places—fixed to be a faithful soldier of the Cross. My eye shall be circumspect and my armor bright.

The Lord dispose each of us to make such a resolution, and give us strength to keep it. As "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem," so may we steadfastly set our faces towards the Heavenly City, and stop not till we cross its golden threshold, and are surrounded with its glories.

SERMON CCCCLXIII.

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GOD'S WORD UNFAILING.*

For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.—ISAIAH 55: 10.

IN the natural world, there is a wise adaptation of agencies to produce beneficial results. So perfect is the wisdom of that God who presides over the course of nature, as intuitively to comprehend her operations, and to provide those instrumentalities which may be needed to effect an important and valuable end. The

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world is full of agents which are co-operating, each in its own proper sphere, to fulfil his wise designs.

One of these agents is the sun whose beams irradiate the earth, quicken its vegetation, and impart those influences by which it is refreshed with rain in due proportions, and supplied with the light and heat which are required to bring its fruits to maturity and prepare them for the sustenance of man.

Another of these agents is water, which, under the influence of heat, ascends from the earth as vapor, floats in the atmosphere, is collected into clouds, borne by the winds to places the most remote, condensed by cold, and shed down again to earth as rain or dew, and when congealed by the winter's frost, as snow or hail. This self-regulating process of evaporation and condensation, has existed from the creation of the world. The sun exhales the vapor from the earth, the atmosphere sustains it, the clouds become the vehicles of its transportation, and it is discharged from them in a form best suited to the irrigation of the soil. Thus the earth is constantly refreshed with moisture, and enabled to sustain vegetable life; the fountains are supplied, the brooks replenished, and the ground prepared for the labors of the husbandmen. Through this simple process, God performs a great work for man; and he provides seed for the sower, and bread for the eater, which, human wisdom, independently of his agency, could never obtain.

These beneficial results in the natural world, are produced through His providential care; and, in the moral world, He is equally the source of all good influences, and His word is the channel through which they flow.—"For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

The truth communicated by the prophet respecting the Messiah's advent, his sufferings and death, and the universal extension of his kingdom, and which comprises everything essential to salvation, is the word to which special allusion is here made. These are the great truths which pervade the whole system of revelation, and bind all its parts together in symmetrical and beautiful proportions. We do no injustice to the text, therefore, when we apply it to the whole of that word which God has communicated to man for the guidance of his moral actions, and as his directory to heaven.

This word is contained in the Sacred Scriptures, which have been divinely given to men. God has had personal and direct intercourse with them, and His communications have been put on record. He has written His law on two tables of stone, and re-

vealed it to the world through Moses. He has inspired holy men of old with a knowledge of the truth which they have written down by His directions and published. The thoughts or will of God thus expressed to men, are properly denominated His Word.

To this the Psalmist often refers as the source of instruction, guidance, counsel, admonition, joy, and hope. "Give me understanding," he says, "according to thy word." "Order my steps in thy word." "Quicken me according to thy word." "I will delight in thy statutes, I will not forget thy word." "I hope in thy word."

This word is, through various channels of communication, imparted to men; and its influence on the intellectual and moral world, resembles that of the rain and dew on the world of nature.

The press exerts an efficient agency in the dissemination of truth; and, through its instrumentality, copies of the Word of God are indefinitely multiplied. Modern improvements in the arts, have brought them to such perfection that an edition of the Sacred Oracles may be thrown off from the press in a very brief portion of time, and the rags which are gathered from the streets to-day, may to-morrow present themselves as a volume, containing the whole of the revealed will of God to man; nor are there any bounds to the multiplication of these volumes.

The Word of God, thus fitted for use, and communicating all that is essential to salvation, may lie upon one's table, and be daily consulted, as the mariner consults his chart to discover the difficulties and dangers which may affect his safety in a hitherto untried voyage. It may be made the companion of his life, may accompany him in his travels, converse with him by the way, comfort him in affliction, prepare him for the varied changes of his earthly pilgrimage, and enable him, at last, to reach in safety his journey's end.

Through parental instruction, vast multitudes receive their first impressions of truth; and through the Sabbath school and other analagous methods, is the Word of God brought into contact with the human heart, instructing, counselling, admonishing, and guiding those who are reached by its influences.

Christian example is another, and one of the most efficient means of communicating the Word of God. It presents to view an embodiment of its holy precepts, and exhibits to the world the superior excellence of its doctrines. The example of Christ, which is set forth in the Sacred Records, is a practical exemplification of the precepts which he taught, and it will be the means of conveying to mankind a more perfect knowledge of his religion to the end of time. So also does the example of Christians give an apt illustration of the truth; and it is compared by our Savior to light shining in darkness.

But, it is through the voice of the living preacher, that this Word

is especially designed to be communicated to men. Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to go into all the world and make known his Gospel to all nations; and in obedience to this injunction, many have already gone forth, bearing his Gospel in their hands and on their lips, to remote nations; and there is scarcely a people on the face of the whole earth, who have not heard proclaimed in their own tongue the wonderful works of God.

The influence of the Word as thus disseminated, is as necesary for the promotion of happiness in the moral world, as the rain and dew are in the world of nature, for the production of those fruits which are required for human subsistence. We view the luxuriant garden, with its varieties of fruit and flower, and the landscape, as it spreads itself out in beauty to the eye; we repose under the shade of the thick foliage, and are led with gratitude to view the evidences of our Creator's goodness which are on every side displayed to our observation; and when we see the morning dew glistening in the sunbeam, and the gentle showers descending on the fields and groves, we discover a primary cause of this beauty in the element which is so wisely dispensed. Let this be withheld, and the attractions of this natural scenery would soon all vanish.

So the Word of God, in the moral world, is the source of all those genial influences which impart happiness to man, and embellish the field of moral vision which lies around him. Go where the influence of this Word has never been felt, and the eye will rest only on a moral desert, as bleak and desolate as the vices and wickedness of man can make it. But when the Word of God sheds its benignant influences down upon this waste, its aspect is changed, and in place of darkness, ignorance, superstition and sin, there are knowledge, religion, and happiness diffused abroad.

But how, it is asked, is this change produced, and in what way does the Word of God accomplish this desired result. This we may perceive, if we view the effects which this word produces on a single individual whom we assume to be a fair representative of the race. He is one who has wandered far from God and is naturally possessed of a sinful heart,—a heart full of desires which he does not approve, and whose tendencies are to courses of conduct which he has prohibited. Living to his own worldly enjoyment, he has cast off his higher responsibilities to his Creator. God as the object of love, is not in all his thoughts. The language which his conduct speaks respecting him is, depart from us for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. This man is a fair representative of the world without God. His desires, if indulged without restraint, would bear him far away from moral virtue, and sink him from his present position in society to the lowest point in the descending scale, and into a worse state of dark-

ness, pollution and guilt, than ever presents itself to view within the moral horizon. But at length he is reached by the Word of God as in one or another of its forms it is communicated to the world.

Perhaps while wandering in the street on the holy Sabbath he enters a Christian sanctuary; and the voice of the minister of the Word, pourtraying the human heart in its degeneracy, arrests his attention. He listens with an interest before unfelt; and while his own character is presented to view through the moral likeness which it bears to others of the human family, he feels the truth. The Word, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, becomes quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The law of God arrayed before him in its spirituality and power, becomes the mirror in which he sees himself reflected, and when he departs from the sanctuary, it is with the inquiry on his lips "what must I do?"

Again he seeks that sacred place, and a new theme is introduced. He hears from the minister of the Word, that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," that "he came to seek and save them that are lost." It is a truth adapted to the necessities of his moral nature, and which comes home with power to his heart. He listens to the wonders of redemption, and of the forgiveness of sins through a Savior's name; and while the cross in its attractions is held up to view, he looks upon his Savior there as expiating by his death the sins of men. This, he says, is the very Savior that I need. I am that poor lost sinner whom he came to save; he died on that cross for me. Then the thought of his own ingratitude to one who has given his life for his redemption, pierces his heart. His soul is melted to tenderness, his eyes overflow with tears; he bows in penitence at his feet in true submission, while his affections, now renewed and changed, go forth and fix themselves on Christ, his Savior. He is now ready to wash his feet with his tears, and to wipe them with the hair of his head. He receives him by faith into his heart, becomes an imitator of his excellence, and henceforth lives to reflect his glory in the dark world around him. This momentous change in his character and destiny, is effected through the power of that divine Word, which like the fire and the hammer breaketh the flinty rock in pieces.

These are the legitimate effects of this word, when its power is exerted on a single heart; and similar to these are the effects produced in all who experience the moral transformation which it imparts. Such changes are rapidly multiplied under the auspicious influences of the Holy Spirit, when they are poured out on the Christian Church. Under its ministration, churches are built

up, revivals of religion encouraged, morals are improved and society is blest. Its effects are discoverable in all classes of the community; conversions are multiplied, vicious customs changed, the charities of religion assume the place of selfishness, and the dark places of the world, once the habitations of cruelty, become illumined by those celestial beams before which vice hides its polluted head, and the enemies of virtue retire abashed and confounded.

When the missionaries of the cross first bore this Word to the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, they discovered nothing but moral darkness there. Ignorance and superstition reigned triumphant, and sin had enthroned itself in the hearts of that degraded people. But when the spoken language of the natives had been reduced to a written form, and the word of God had been published in that language, when it had been taught in the Sabbath school, communicated through the press, proclaimed from the pulpit, and exemplified in the lives of its ministers, and when the Holy Spirit had descended in connexion with their teachings a change vast and great ensued. Knowledge, civilization, and religion, were the fruits of the Word as there dispensed; and that once degraded people became, through its influence, comparatively enlightened and happy.

India was once a moral waste. The most horrid cruelties were fostered by the rites of a false religion there, and throughout all India, the eye could not rest on a single spot which was not darkened with ignorance, and given over to the unbroken reign of a bloody superstition. But the Word of God has been borne to India, and wherever if has been dispensed, light has been irradiated; and now from the very heart of India to its utmost bounds its influence is beginning to be felt, changing the customs of society, banishing vice, repressing the cruelties of a false religion, and converting some souls to God. And in reflecting on the past, who can doubt, that not India only, but Africa, and the whole world shall soon feel the spiritual and life-giving power of this divine word, and be turned in heart unto the Lord.

It cannot return unto Him void. Whether declarative of saving truth, or the future extension and glory of the Church, it will be alike operative. Many, to whom it is in kindness borne, may slight it; many may cast it aside as the rocky cliff sheds off from its impenetrable surface the mercy drops of heaven, and they may thus deprive themselves of its saving power. But God's beneficence is not the less because those whom it would bless will not receive the blessing. Others will be benefited by it if they do not. The sower will still continue to receive his seed, and the hungry their food, and this is the object which God has in view; not that the indolent shall share with the industrious, nor the scornful contemner of grace, as do the humble recipients of it.

It is true that there have been periods in the history of the world discouraging in their aspect. Who could have read the divine promises of the future extension of the Church a few centuries since, and, from the state of the world as it then was, could have anticipated anything but a failure of these predictions? Eventful periods there have ever been in the progress and spread of true religion when everything seemed gloomy. But even then, amid all its discouragements, faith has triumphed, and the result has proved that the Word of God is unfailing.

Abraham enjoyed the promise of an innumerable seed, and that they should possess the land of Canaan as their inheritance. But there was a time when the prospect of the accomplishment of this prediction was very faint. Oppressed by the strong arm of power, and for centuries enslaved, the Israelites were dispirited, and their faith had become almost extinct, when, suddenly, light broke upon them, and under the guidance of that God who went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, they crossed the trackless desert, cast out the heathen before them, and possessed the promised land.

When the city of Jerusalem had been demolished, and the Jewish nation transported in captivity to Babylon, God announced through his prophets the termination of their captivity, and that their city and temple should be again rebuilt, the latter with more glory than before; and he fixed the time when these great events should transpire.

But cheerless were the hopes of those who sat down by the rivers in Babylon, hanged their harps on the willows, and wept when they remembered Zion. But when the predicted period came, the Babylonish dynasty had been displaced by that of the Persian conqueror. A new king was upon the throne, and he became the agent, in God's hands, of restoring the captive nation to its home and of rearing again the walls of their city and temple.

When the advent, character and work of Christ were predicted there were many things respecting them which seemed dark, contradictory, and inexplicable. But in the fulness of time the truth of every prediction was fully verified, so that we, in this age of the world, look back in astonishment at the accuracy of the word of promise as compared with the result. So also in respect to the rise of Anti-christ and of the Mahommedan power, and in respect to their declination and fall, has God's Word hitherto not returned unto Him void.

Never did this word seem more inoperative than in the dark ages. Then the Church had only a name to live, and the Word of God was for centuries withheld from it. It was hidden and lost, as were the books of the law during the reign of some of the idolatrous kings of Judah. It was neither read in the closet, nor published from the pulpit; but it lay concealed in monasteries,

where it had accumulated the dust of successive generations. Consequently its peculiar influences were unfelt, excepting by the few who still retained it in the mountains of Piedmont and the nation of the Waldenses. There, in those secluded valleys, and amid those inaccessible rocks, far away from the theatre of human ambition and of worldly strife, this Word continued to be preached, and to pour forth among that people its healthful influences, like their own beautiful springs, which, issuing from the shaded recesses of their mountains, sent their sparkling waters coursing down their vales.

But when Luther discovered it, produced it from the cloister, translated it into the language of the people, and sent it forth clothed in its own simplicity and power, it imparted a new impulse to religion, and changed the moral aspect of the world. While hidden in monasteries, and withheld from the study of mankind, it must have seemed as if the promises of God respecting it could never be accomplished; but no sooner was it brought to light, than the hopes of its enemies were overthrown.

As a branch of the river Tigris, when it reaches a certain point in its course, buries itself in the soil, and pursues its subterranean way, depriving the earth above it of its verdure and leaving it a sandy desert, till at length it emerges from its hidden channel, and courses down a vale watered and beautified by its refreshing influence, so the Word of God, at the dark ages, disappeared from the world and all seemed lost; but, at the era of the Reformation, it emerged from its concealment, and has since continued rolling onward in its course, as the river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.

When Wickliffe and others who succeeded him, had translated the Scriptures into the English tongue, and when, by royal permission, this Word had been set up in the Churches and allowed to be read and preached, the sturdy mind of the common people soon became embued with its truths, and they would no longer consent to bow their necks to the yoke of a tyrant's bondage, for they rejoiced in that liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. Steadily have they advanced in the enjoyment of the blessings, which accompany the knowledge of this Word, and to this, we, their descendants, owe our liberties, the enjoyment of ur wise institutions, our social order and happiness, and those eternal hopes which are the crown of our blessings and our most invaluable heritage.

Look abroad on this fair land, adorned with every natural beauty, rich in its resources, the abode of freedom, the home of religion, the Eden of the world, and ask, what is the chief source of our happiness, and whence do we derive those invaluable blessings which cluster around us, and of which the knowledge of God is chief. And the reply is, we owe them all to that divine word

which is read in the closet, taught in the Sabbath school, published from the pulpit, and communicated through innumerable channels to the heart. God has said that wherever dispensed, it shall not return unto him void; and here may we behold the fulfilment of this promise, here gather up abundant testimonies that his Word is true.

And when shall the progress and influence of this Word be stayed? Not while the heart of Christian love continues to beat in the disciples of Christ, and the eye of pity to look upon one of the apostate race, who is ignorant of the true God and Savior. Nor while the press, and the very elements themselves, are made subsidiary to the promulgation of this Word. Not while the Christian pulpit is free, and continues to utter forth its heavenly truths with fidelity and power. Not while from the valleys to the mountain tops, the song of praise is caught and re-echoed by the devoted followers of the Lamb, increasing in numbers and activity for the promotion of this cause. No! there will be no stay to its progress, till the world shall be free from the ruin of the great apostacy, and Christ, the sun of Righteousness, shall shed his blessed beams down into every darkened spot on the face of the whole earth. Till then, "as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. In view of this subject, we may perceive,

1. That the Christian and the Church are safe.

That Word which created the earth and spread out the heavens —which gives law to the the countless worlds which roll above us —upholds the universe, and from age to age endures the same—is that which is pledged for the safety of all who confide in it.

The material objects of beauty and grandeur on which we often gaze in admiration, shall all pass away. The time is coming when the mountains and valleys shall be no more; when the eye shall no longer rest on the verdant fields and majestic forests; when the rivers shall no longer roll their sparkling waters onward, nor the mighty ocean longer lash our shores; for the world and all things that are therein, shall be consumed, "and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and pass away;" but never will there come a time when God's Word shall return unto Him void. It will endure amid these changes, and is inviolable, for "Though the mountains depart, and the hills be removed, yet my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee."

The eternal hills do not rest on so sure a foundation, as do the hopes of those who repose their confidence in the Savior. "I

give unto them eternal life, said He, and they shall never perish." "My father who gave them me is greater than all, and no man shall pluck them out of my Father's hand." Nothing can occur to destroy their happiness. They are safe, for ever safe, because they are sustained by the sure Word of promise, and are upheld by the everlasting Arm.

So also is the Church safe which is built on these promises. It may be called to suffer trials, be conscious of discouragements, and driven to repose a more entire confidence in its divine Protector, but still it is sustained by him who has said, "I have graven thee on the palms of my hand, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

The enemy may come in like a flood, error may undermine her influence, friends may prove traitors to her cause, infidelity may unfold its black banner, and summon its votaries into the field, but God is with his Church, and he has said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. In times of danger, He will appear for her deliverance, and her enemies shall lick the dust, "for the Lord shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."

2. The obligations which rest on us, to exert an influence for the dissemination of this Divine Word.

It is the Word of Life to all who receive it, and it comes to us loaded with blessings. In all our difficulties and trials, it opens to us sources of heavenly consolation, and through it we are permitted to look beyond this vale of tears, to the bright morning which dawns beyond the grave. To it we owe the blessings which distinguish us from the heathen on our borders, and it becomes us to cherish a grateful heart toward Him who has conferred these blessings on us, and to exert our influence to give them the widest possible extension.

Great and solemn responsibilities devolve on us; and it becomes us, while deriving encouragement from divine promises and their fulfilment hitherto, not to overlook these responsibilities.

In this blessed work, the ministry, the eldership, and the Church, are to bear a distinct and appropriate part. There are a thousand channels through which Christian influence may flow, to affect the destinies of the world; nor is there a disciple of Christ, however, humble or poor, who may not make his influence felt in the remotest nation. Thus may the Word of God be borne abroad, to shed its blessings on distant and heathen lands. Places remote and near may become the recipients of these blessings, and the whole earth may rejoice in its beneficent and life-giving power.

The hope of the world for the accomplishment of this great end, is the Church. Not the Church as it is represented in any one of

its numerous denominations, and presented to view in a sectarian aspect; but the Church composed of all who sincerely love this Sacred Word, and have experienced in their hearts, its sanctifying influence—the invisible Church of God, whose names are written in heaven.

Do you ask where this Church is to be found? We reply, wherever the genial influences of this Word have been felt, infusing life into the dead soul of man, changing its enmity to love, winning its affections over to God, and converting the soul to him. Those who are reconciled to him by the precious blood of that Savior in whom they trust, are his Church.

Tell us not of the exclusive claims which men have set up. Tell us not of the different phases and aspects in which this church is presented to the world, and that one only can be true; for we have the sure testimony of the blessed God, that all who love him in sincerity, united by faith to his Son, shall enter into his rest. Their names are written in heaven; they are his church on earth in whatever Christian association they may be found.

The Word of God contained in the sacred volume, may be differently bound and gilt, according to the fancy of those who possess it; but it contains the same blessed Word, and conveys the same precious truth to the soul: So the Church of Christ exists on earth in different forms, and in different countries, and in different denominations, but it is one and the same Church, because all who belong to it love the same Savior, and strive for the advancement of the same blessed cause.

Our Christian responsibilities lie within the circle of our influence, and we are to do all in our power as members of the Church of Christ, to promote the dissemination of his sacred truth. We are ever to keep this object steadily in view, and to feel, that we are bound not to live unto ourselves, but unto Christ.

3. We may learn for our encouragement the certainty of the universal spread and triumph of the divine Word.

We are assured that it will not return void, and that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea; and were we disposed to doubt on this subject, there are innumerable testimonies which confirm and establish it.

There are obstacles, it is true, to the spread of the gospel which are yet to be removed, and deficiencies to be supplied. Christian charity needs to be enlarged, and Christian effort put forth with more energy, and in a more humble spirit of dependence and of faith. But, so sure as God is true, these deficiencies will be provided for, and these obstacles overcome. The work is the work of God, and it will certainly be accomplished. It will move forward, not in the wild majesty of the tornado, nor in the fury of a tempest; but the silent and gentle influences of the

Word shall gradually pervade the mass of human mind, as the rain and dew the thirsty earth.

The time is coming, when all who oppose themselves to the progress of this word shall fall before it. The kings and rulers of the earth who tremble for their thrones if this word should prevail, are to be changed in their policy or deprived of their power. The proud and mighty who will not yield themselves to its supremacy, shall be broken without the hand; formality is to give place to the spirit of religion, and all who love God will devote their energies to propagate His truth. It will go forth conquering and to conquer, till all its enemies shall be subdued, and the whole earth shall come under its life-giving influence.

Lift up your eyes, O downcast disciple, and view the evidences of the progress of this blessed cause. Go stand on the plains of India, and hear those idolaters read in their own native tongue of the Savior of men; hear them speak of the waning power of Bramah and of Vishnoo, and of the rising glories of the kingdom of the Redeemer. Go to benighted Africa, and see the untamed passions of the Hottentot subdued, and the bloody warrior sitting, like a little child, at the feet of the missionary of the cross. Go to the Islands of the Pacific, and behold a nation born to God in a day, the polluted savage changed into a man of prayer, and those dark spots of ignorance and superstition, becoming the abode of civilization, religion and happiness. Go wherever this word has exerted its appropriate influence, and you will see the moral deserts of the world blooming like the rose, barbarous and savage customs giving way before it, ignorance dispelled, and superstition and idolatry abandoned; you will hear the voice of prayer in place of idolatrous shouts over human victims offered in sacrifice, and the sweet songs of Zion ascending from voices hitherto unused to sacred melody. O what changes are transpiring in the world under the influences of the truth!

We hail the day, the glorious day, which is now dawning! The night is past, and the bright tints of the morning now deck the eastern sky. It is time to awake out of sleep. Too long have we already slumbered in unbelief and sin. Fathers and brethren of our beloved Church, awake. Ye who have enlisted in the sacred cause of your Redeemer, awake! awake! Behold the banner of the cross is unfurled! It floats in the breeze! The martial trumpet sounds, for the day is come, and the Lord himself musters his hosts to the battle.

Let the cry be, onward! Press on! press on, ye who have enrolled yourselves as the soldiers of the cross. Press on to victory! Shout, ye ransomed of the Lord, for great will be the day of your triumph!

But, remember, that it is not with carnal weapons that you are to begin, or end the strife. Put up thy sword within the sheath; for

they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual.

Go forth, then, my brethren, and exemplify this Word of Life in the dark world around you. Teach it to your children, communicate it through the various channels of influence which Christian benevolence opens to you; publish it from the pulpit; send it forth, and let its influence silently pervade the world, and haste to the accomplishment of the great object for which it is designed—the salvation and happiness of guilty and ruined man. "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. "Even so blessed Jesus, let thy kingdom come, and let the whole earth be filled with thy glory!

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SERMON CCCCLXIV.

BY REV. ROBERT BAIRD, D.D.,

NEW YORK.

NATIONAL PROSPERITY.—A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

He hath not dealt so with any nation.—Psalm cxlvii. 20.

It is obvious that this sentence is elliptical, and needs the interpolation of the word *other*, both to make it conformable to the present idiom of our language, and to express the meaning of the author. "He hath not dealt so with any other nation."

The goodness of God to the people of Israel, His distinguishing mercies to the nation which He had chosen for Himself, is a theme to which the mind of the Psalmist seems ever to revert, let the subject which he had undertaken to celebrate be what it may.

For instance, when he would set forth the wonders and the glories of creation; when he speaks, in all the glowing language of the most exalted poetry, of the works of God,—whether seen in the "heavens" which his hands had made,—"the moon and the stars" which He had ordained—or, in the "great sea," wherein are all manner of living things; or in the fields and forests with which the earth is covered and adorned, with all their varied productions of flowers, and grass, and trees; or in the air, with all its happy inhabitants;—he returns again and again to his beloved theme, the goodness of God to His "chosen nation," to His "Zion," to His "Jerusalem," as manifested in those spiritual blessings which constituted their noblest inheritance.

In some instances, his mind, after descanting on the works of Creation and Providence, pours itself forth in praise and adoration for God's distinguishing favors to His people, in the closing verses of a psalm. Sometimes he mingles both together, and passes from one subject to the other, as if the contemplation of God's goodness and glory in the works of Creation and Providence, led him directly to the contemplation of those displayed in the religious economy

which He gave to His people, and the gracious revelation of His will which is identified with that economy. Of this the psalm from which the text is taken is a remarkable instance. "Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God; who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, to the young ravens which cry. He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; Praise thy God, O Zion. For He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; He hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat. He sendeth forth His commandment upon earth: His word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold? He sendeth out His word, and melteth them: He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters to flow. He sheweth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord."

But it is when the Psalmist undertakes to recount the dealings of God with the Jews as a nation, and gives us those beautiful epitomes of their history which are contained in some of his sweet lyrical compositions, which are perfect models of this sort of writing, that we meet most frequently with those outburstings of a grateful heart, filled with holy joy and gratitude in the retrospective survey of God's goodness, temporal and spiritual, to the people over whom he was called in his providence to reign. How he delights to celebrate God's goodness to them as a people from the first! How often he reverts to His wonders in Egypt, in the Red Sea, in the Wilderness, and during the period of their becoming planted in the land promised of old to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But great as was His providential goodness to them as a nation, it was as nothing in comparison with His spiritual blessings, the chiefest of which was the fact that He had made them the depositaries of His "word," His "statutes," His "testimonies," His "judgments," His "ordinances," His "precepts." His soul seems as if it could not find words adequate to express its admiration of that glorious Revelation which God had made of His will and character to the people of Israel, and which had not then been imparted to other nations.

And well might the Psalmist extol the goodness of Jehovah to the nation to which he belonged, and over which he was made a ruler. Never had nation such a wonderful history! They were God's chosen race; He watched over them from their infancy as

a people! He brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand; led them through the wilderness, Himself marching at their head in the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. He drove out the heathen from the land which he had given by promise to Abraham and his seed, and planted them there. And notwithstanding their frequent departures from His ordinances, and their grevious offences as a people, He still watched over them as a father, and interposed to save them from destruction which their sins had so often provoked and so richly merited. It is no wonder that he so frequently exclaims in some of these historical psalms: "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

But if the Psalmist could exclaim, in reviewing the dispensations of God towards the Jew: "He hath not dealt so with any other nation," I think that there is a sense and a measure in which we also may employ similar language in reference to his dealings with our own nation. Surely on many accounts we may say with truth: He hath not dealt with any other nation in modern times as He hath dealt with us! To convince ourselves of this we have only to take a faithful and grateful restrospective notice of His dealings with us from the first to the present day.

I. The origin of this nation has been a wonderful display of the goodness of God.

With the exception of the Jews, never had nation such an origin. No colonies planted by Egypt or Phœnicia, Greece or Rome in ancient times, can be compared with those planted on our shores, from which has sprung our happy nation. Nor yet those which France, Spain, and Portugal have planted on our continent in modern days. Let us consider for a moment the circumstances which led to a large part of the emigrations from Europe to this land in the 17th century, and the characters of those who left the Old World for this portion of the New, and we cannot fail to be convinced of the truth of the position just assumed.

I The colonization of New England is known to all who have any definite acquaintance with the origin of this nation. It forms a wonderful chapter in the history of England as well as of our own country. Thousands of the best Christians of Old England, who had committed no crime,—who loved their country notwithstanding the hard usage they received in it—after having in vain sought to maintain and promote a purer Protestantism than the imperfectly accomplished Reformation of the 16th century had given to their country, were compelled to seek refuge and freedom of conscience, in the wilderness which covered the shores of what is now New England. There they planted colonies which gradually spread over all that part of these United States, and whose descendants are now found scattered over all our land, especially the

north western part,—everywhere bearing those distinctive characteristics which a Puritan Faith had given their ancestors. On the shores of New England were set up those remarkable christian commonwealths which in after times were destined to exert so great an influence on our whole country and the world. They were consecrated to God and his Gospel, and they have not disappointed the hopes of those who were their founders.

The Fathers of New England—the "Pilgrim Fathers" of blessed memory—were not perfect men. They committed some very grave errors in the politico-ecclesiastical economy which they created. Their minds were not free from all the wrong opinions which prevailed in their day, in all parts of Christendom, respecting the right of the civil magistrate to interfere in sacred things. Nor did they well understand the rights of conscience. But they were much in advance of the rest of mankind on many subjects, not even excluding those just referred to. They aimed at doing some great and good thing for God and for posterity; and God has owned, and posterity blessed, their noble efforts. From less than 22,000 colonists have sprung nearly five millions of people—in New England and out of it—who have no superiors, taken as a body, in the world, for inelligence, industry, enterprise, sound morality, and a knowledge of true Christianity.

2. Whilst the colonization of New England was going on, that of the Southern States, which had an earlier commencement by a few years, was advancing. But the colonists from England who settled in the South were very different, as a body, from those who sought a home in the North. Nevertheless, there were among them not a few who desired, by emigrating to the New World, not only to enlarge the boundaries of the kingdom within which they were born, and to which they were sincerely attached, but also to promote the growth of that which consists in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The conversion of the "Savages" was one of the objects which they had at heart, and this led them at an early day to lay the foundation of schools, in which "Heathen youths" might be taught the Gospel. Still a great majority were men of the loose faith and irreligious character of the political party to which they had belonged in England—the "Cavaliers"—the antipodes in religion and politics to the "Puritans" and "Roundheads," who founded the northern colonies. One of the southern colonies was originally Roman Catholic—a fact which marked still further the difference in character between the first settlers of the two great sections of our country.

Between the Northern and Southern Colonies lay the territory which was claimed by Holland; and, on the banks of the Hudson, emigrants from that country had planted themselves, before the people of John Robinson established themselves at "New Plymouth." And, although commercial enterprise and merely colonial

settlements for trade with the aborigines, were the predominating motives which led to the formation of the Dutch settlements in New Netherlands, yet it is unquestionably true, that pious people came over at a very early period, who planted the institutions of religion there, and contributed to the extension of Christ's kingdom in that direction.

Thus was colonization commenced in the southern, middle, and northern portions of our country bordering on the sea. And, from what has just been stated, it is evident that there was a great deficiency in the first named two sections, of that evangelical and effective piety which prevailed in the last.

But, mark the providence of God, which so mercifully interposed to cause that deficiency to be made good, in some measure at least, by causing a subsequent colonization, of a very different character, to go forward in the middle and southern portions of our country. For this purpose, he permitted persecution and oppression in the Old World, to cause thousands of excellent men to emigrate to this land from countries which had at first contributed nothing to the colonization of these United States.

3. From the British realm came many people of sterling principle and well-tried attachment to the pure Gospel. The attempt to enforce Prelacy, and all its semi-Popish dogmas and ceremonies, upon the sturdy followers of John Knox, led very many to abandon Scotland for America, bringing with them their indomitable love of a Calvinistic faith and a Presbyterian form of church government. And, as their influence was not needed in New England, (where, indeed, their ecclesiastical preferences would not have been acceptable to the followers of Brown), the providence of God directed their steps to New Jersey, New-York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas. To the same sections of our country went the pious people who left the North of Ireland and the Principality of Wales,—less from the motive of actual persecution than from a desire of greater security and more ample enjoyment of religious liberty. These streams of emigration, though much less than that from Scotland, contributed to augment the amount of piety in the middle and southern colonies.

4. But let us look to the Continent, and remark what was going on there, and its influence upon this country In France, persecution had scarcely ceased since the first attempts, in the reign of Francis I., to introduce the reformation. Under Henry II. (the son and successor of Francis I.), and his three sons, Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III., who succeeded him, as well as during the reign of Louis XIII., the Protestants were harassed and persecuted almost without cessation. It was only under the reign of Henry IV. that they had quiet, and a partial enjoyment of their religious rights, and that during a comparatively brief period. Under the dominion of Louis XIV., their sorrows and sufferings

and, in the end, crowned their efforts with glorious success.

And, since the commencement of the era of independence, how gracious have been the dispensations of God towards this land. Through what trials has He carried us! Through what scenes of doubt and deep solicitude has He safely led us, opening up a way for us, when there appeared nothing but an insuperable barrier before us! How often has He appeared to shed a glorious light through the thick gloom and darkness which overhung our pathway! How often has He, through the counsels of wise men, poured the oil of peace and concord on the troubled waves of popular and sectional strife! How often has He saved us from disastrous collisions with foreign nations, and from the still more disastrous evils of war among ourselves! And when he permitted us, as a punishment for our sins, to fall into an unhappy contest with England, more than thirty years ago, in His mercy He did not allow it to be one of very long continuance. Let us hope that the deplorable war in which we have been so unexpectedly and so unhappily involved with a southern neighbour, will, through His invoked and gracious interference, be brought to a speedy conclusion. He that has so often interposed to save us as a people,—"because His goodness endureth for ever"—will not desert us in our present exigency, if we seek Him with hearts contrite for our many national sins.

Surely, therefore, we may well exclaim, in reviewing the goodness of God as manifested in the *history* of our country: "He hath not dealt so with any other nation!"

III. But most of all does this goodness appear in the great spiritual mercies which He has bestowed upon us as a people.

1. And first of all, this land is blessed with the Sabbath beyond all other countries in Christendom, save Great Britain.*

It has fallen to my lot to see all the countries in Christendom, except the Spanish and Portuguese portions of our own Continent; and for these no one will, for a moment, plead an exclusion from the category of Sabbath-neglecting countries. And I can truly affirm that there is nothing in all the circumstances of our country which strikes my mind so favorably as the fact, that this entire nation, to so great an extent, enjoys the Sabbath. That there is the open and flagrant violation of the Sabbath, in very many ways —by travelling on our public roads and on our rivers, and by excursions for pleasure and for sin, in the neighbourhood of our cities and towns,—is not to be denied. There is here ample room for reformation; and the evil in question demands the most strenuous efforts of the good, and even of the patriotic, to effect its removal. But let us not be ungrateful for the good we do enjoy. Let us bless

* I use the words Great Britain, in their most restricted sense, to denote only England, Wales, and Scotland.

God that the Sabbath is as widely enjoyed, and as greatly respected as it is. It is one of Heaven's choicest blessings to mankind. It secures to the poor man repose, and leisure for self-improvement; and gives time to all to prepare for another life. It is a blessing to the very brute creation which toils for the benefit of man. And all experience proves that no individuals, no nation even, pursue so certain and profitable an industry as those who observe one day in seven, as a day of rest and of religious instruction.

There *is* Sabbath-breaking in this land—there is much of it. But we do not begin to know what the neglect of the Fourth Commandment means, in comparison with all the other nations in Christendom, with the solitary exception which I have made. Let the man who would comprehend this evil in all its phases, and in all its extent, visit France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Austria,—in Papal Christendom,—and portions of Germany, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden—in that which is Protestant—and although he will find a decided difference in favour of the latter, he will return to our happy country, praising God for the blessings of the Sabbath, as well as for the general appreciation of it, which prevail among us.

2. This is the land of the Bible. In this respect our country is eminently favored. The Word of God is found very extensively in the possession of this nation. Widely different is the state of things in most parts of Christendom. With respect to them it may be said—"His judgments they have not known." To us He has showed His "Word," His "Statutes," and His "Judgments." As to the number of those who do not possess the Scriptures, however great it may be, it is wholly inconsiderable in comparison with those who do. And all may have them if they will, for the Sacred Volume is for sale in every village of this land. Great efforts are continually making to supply the families which are destitute. There will always be destitution, owing to the rapid increase of our population by births and by immigration. But it will constantly be in a process of being supplied.

God has emphatically imparted His Word to this nation. Nor is there wanting a wide-spread respect for the Sacred Oracles. There are few men of influence and intelligence in our country who do not consider the Bible indispensable both to our religious hopes and our political prosperity. It is justly regarded as God's book, and the people's book. And it is one of the greatest glories of this land that it is the land of the Bible.

Let me add that ours is a land of Sabbath Schools and Bible classes, institutions whose chief object is to read and study the Word of God. It is true that there is great room for improvement. The Bible is not as much read as it ought to be among us—far from it. Yet it is read and appreciated to a degree unknown in almost all

grateful thanksgiving to-day; and every day, indeed, of our lives. Let us stir ourselves up to the performance of this great duty. Let us for this purpose often recall, in a distinct and deliberate manner, the goodness of God towards us as a people, and thus excite our hearts to grateful emotions and their appropriate expression. This is obviously a most important and sacred duty.

And yet it is to be feared that it is one which is sadly neglected. Ingratitude to God is a great sin—it is a very heinous and grievous one. It is, I think, one of the greatest of all our national and individual offences. We are an ungrateful people. Our vanity and pride are disgusting, and Heaven-insulting. There is not a nation on earth which has so much for which to be grateful; and yet who among us realizes this as he ought, and renders to God the gratitude which is His due? How ready are we to murmur and rebel! We are never satisfied. Prosperity renders us not only ungrateful, but also atheistical. "Has not my hand gotten me this wealth," we are ready to ask, forgetting Him "in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways." May God, in his mercy, give us a better spirit, even one of humble obedience, and of devout gratitude for all his blessings.

2. I think it is eminently a duty, this day, to confess and deplore our national sins, and entreat God to forgive them all for Christ's sake. Surely our sins are very numerous and great. And we have just reason to fear, lest on account of our aggravated transgressions, the judgments of Heaven may fall upon us, and even that the great blessings, which we have so long and so dreadfully abused, may be taken away from us. There are many things in our present circumstances as a nation which should awaken serious apprehension, lead to unfeigned confession of our sins, and excite to earnest prayer and supplication, that the evils which we have so much reason to dread, may not be allowed to come upon us. It cannot be denied by any one that there are some clouds gathering in our horizon that are not a little portentous. Now, if ever, is the time that calls for a deprecation of merited wrath, as well as thanksgivings for past and present mercies.

3. The fact that God hath dealt with us as he has not with any other nation, lays us under peculiar and very powerful obligations to do what we can to impart to others the blessings of his Gospel, which are our distinguishing,—our crowning mercies,—the source of our past prosperity, as well as our pledge for the future. We owe everything, under God, to the pure Christianity which has so generally and so benignly shed its radiance upon our land. A double duty is clearly resting upon us—on one hand, to maintain and perpetuate among ourselves the glorious blessings of the Gospel; and on the other, to extend them to other lands which are still destitute of them. It cannot be that God has taken such pains to plant this nation, to watch over it with such care, and

raise it up to its present greatness, in order only that it might be the *Depository* of his blessed Gospel. Oh, no; he would not have us merely *Depositories*, but *Depositaries*—stewards, or *Almoners* rather—to whom he has entrusted this great boon, to impart it to others who have need.

God has done great things *for* us, "wherefore we are glad;" and he expects great things *of* us. Let us beware, lest when he "looks" to this his "vineyard for fruit," it should "bring forth no fruit," and his displeasure be kindled against us.

Our position is remarkably favorable for doing great good in the world. Our relations with other nations have been, with very few exceptions, entirely friendly. We have opened our gates to the poor and oppressed of every land. We have admitted all, come from whatever country, and be their religious creed what it might, to an equal participation in our civil and religious privileges. If we should, therefore, attempt to send what we as Protestants believe to be the true Gospel, into papal or other nominally-Christian countries, where the "Truth as it is in Jesus" has fallen before the march of Superstition or Infidelity, we should stand on the vantage ground of endeavouring to do no more than we allow the foreign advocates of these great errors to do in our own country. We have granted equal liberty to all religionists who come to our shores. We may, with good grace, indulge the hope that we, too, may be allowed to do what we can to spread the Faith which we love in papal and other nominally-Christian lands. If Rome sends her missionaries, and vast sums of money, to spread her religion here, she has no good reason to complain if we endeavour to carry the Truth into her own domains. There is a propriety in *our* doing so. We should only be doing towards her, what she is doing—thanks to our Protestant principles, of religious freedom, carried out to their legitimate extent—with our consent, towards us. She ought not, therefore, to complain; nor ought she to be surprised if we, too, abandoning the ground of *defensive* warfare only, should begin to act on that of *offensive* also.

Our relations to the Heathen and Mohammedan portions of the world are as favorable as could be desired; and our extensive commerce gives us easy access to them both. Our attempts to carry the Gospel into them have certainly been crowned with an encouraging degree of success. We have nothing, on this score, to discourage us. On the contrary, we have much to excite us to still nobler efforts. As we owe our existence, in some sense, to the spirit of missions—a spirit which led many of our ancestors to come to this land with the hope of extending and promoting Christ's kingdom by so doing—we owe it to ourselves, to the perishing millions, and above all, to God, to do much to impart the Gospel to those nations which are destitute of it. We have, indeed, done something; but it is nothing, compared with our ability;

And, could that benevolence have prevailed in leading the sinner from his sins, would there have been the funeral of the soul?

2. It is implied in the funeral of the soul, that all the efforts of kindness to prevent it have FAILED. So we judge when we attend the funeral of the body. As we look upon the wreck and ruin of death, we see that all the tenderness of love, and all the assiduity and self-denial of kindness have been baffled, and that disease and death have had their triumphant way.

So the idea of the funeral of the soul carries with it the idea that, whatever had been the offices of Christain kindness to prevent that dreadful event, they had all failed. The love of Christ, as a dissuasive from its sins, had been set before it in vain. The gracious Spirit had striven without success. All the rebukes of conscience availed not. And Christian admonitions were wasted on unyielding hardness of heart.

3. The funeral of the soul is most dicisive of the fact, *that it is actually* DEAD! We do not bury the *living body*, but only the dead. The smallest degree of life stays us. The pulsations may be so feeble as to require the closest and most delicate scrutiny to detect them. But, if they *exist* at all, there will be no burial. The procedure of the burial is founded on the most perfect assurance of death.

So it is because the *soul is dead*, that there is a funeral of it. No such solemnity would occur if there were the least spark of spiritual life. The slightest pulsation of such life would save it from that awful solemnity. Never was there the burial of a soul that was not dead. No such event could possibly occur under the government of God.

4. With the funeral of a soul *we cannot avoid associations of sorrow*. It is always so in reference to the body. Its burial! How often it implies the burial of sweetest happiness and fondest hopes! That scene pours a tide of bitterness through bereaved bosoms. How many sighs! How many tears!

But before there can be the funeral of a soul, what sadness there has been over it! Over its spiritual death were there not the tears of a compassionate Saviour? And have not the true people of God, in all ages, mourned over those around them whose sinful courses were hastening them to a burial in the bottomless pit? Every association of thought with the funeral of a soul is one of sadness. Tears, more bitter, have never been shed in this world, than those of pious friends over those dear to them, who, by persistence in sin, were wrapping themselves in the winding-sheet of moral death, and making the funeral solemnities at the Great Day a dreadful certainty!

5. The funeral of a soul suggests itself *as an inevitable consequence of its spiritual death*. It is so with the body. The rites we perform, in connexion with burial, are associated with the un-

avoidable necessity of committing it to the grave. The state of natural death is at war with the health and life of survivors, and there must be a separation of the dead from us. We obey this law as imperious beyond question or resistance.

So of the funeral of the soul. The event of spiritual death having occured, there is no alternative. The funeral of a soul implies its removal from the society of all the pure and the good in the universe. *It must be removed.* It has no more elements of harmony with the holy and happy servants of God, than dead bodies have with living ones. The burial of dead souls is an act of holy justice which the Infinite owes to his own character, and owes to the happiness of those holy beings whose bliss would be marred by the presence of those so utterly discordant in character.

II. I now pass to the various circumstances attending the funeral of the soul.

1. *Vast numbers* of souls will have the rites of burial performed for them *at the same time.* All that finally remains dead in trespasses and sins will be buried. All the fallen angels belong to that number, together with every member of the human family who had lived and died in sin. We have no means of knowing the number, but we have melancholy reasons for believing it will be very great. What vast multitudes, in all generations past, have passed into the grave unreconciled to God! How many are now living in that growing blindness of mind and hardness of heart, which affords sad presage that they will perish! The great day will be the funeral day of innumerable millions!

2. There will be an immense assembly convened as witnesses of that great funeral. At the rites of burial in this world, in cases of distinguished persons, or when the mode of death has been extraordinary, great numbers of people are gathered. But the greatest scene, as respects numbers present, ever witnessed on earth, is as a drop to the ocean, compared with the one now in contemplation. How striking the language of one competent to inform us. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him." *All* the angels! What a congregation! An Apostle speaks of the angels as "an innumerable company." And we read of different ranks as archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Potentates, and Powers, and there are immense numbers, doubtless, in each rank. And we cannot but rationally suppose that, what would summon these orders of holy beings together, would summon all others, if indeed these orders do not include the whole intelligent universe. We cannot therefore doubt that so extraordinary an event as such a solemnity, will draw together the whole rational creation of God.

That, in addition to the *holy* angels, all the *fallen* angels will be present is evident from two facts :

(1.) That direct assertion of Scripture—"And the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."

(2.) The funeral rites will embrace these very beings; for they are "reserved" now in reference to the performance of that very solemnity over them. They of course will be there.

And, in respect to attendance on that scene from *our world*, the context expressly affirms, that before the Judge "shall be gathered *all nations*." And elsewhere it is said—"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works."

If, then, all the angels of God, and all nations, and all the dead, both small and great, are to be present at the great funeral day of souls, then what a congregation; What a funeral solemnity! So important is it, that God summons his whole rational universe to witness it. Surely he must be in earnest when he appoints and prepares such a solemnity. What an event that burial! Whose soul should not have troubled thoughts concerning it!

No wonder this is called the GREAT DAY! How proper to call it THE GREAT FUNERAL! If the greatness of the number of spectators can impart awful grandeur and deep solemnity, this fact is not wanting here!

3 The funeral of souls will be attended with an exhibition of their characters. This is sometimes done at the burial of the body in this world. But it is a settled part of that great solemnity now under discussion. The funeral of souls is an event of such overwhelming magnitude and importance—it will be followed by consequences so terrible—it will be an act of the government of God so awful and so impressive upon the whole witnessing universe, that the Infinite Ruler designs to unfold the reasons fully for treating, as He then will, fallen angels and fallen men. He is about to bury them in the bottomless pit! But he will show, as a reason, that they are DEAD! As the testimony, that a human *body* was dead, would be the complete vindication of its burial, so the testimony that the soul is dead in trespasses and sins, will be the vindication of its burial in perdition! This great fact, the spiritual death of the soul, will be made known, for its moral character shall be fully disclosed. "For God will bring every secret thing into judgment." And such will be the disclosure of iniquity, that "every mouth shall be stopped and the whole world found guilty before God." Then it will be seen, that such was the sinner's enmity against his character, and opposition to his government, and resistance to his will, as to proclaim his spiritual death, and therefore the glorious justice of his burial. The Judge will not declare "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," till he

has shown to the witnessing universe, that the guilty had totally disqualified themselves for Heaven, and that their characters had fitted them for no other place than the regions of woe. So startling and awful will be the display of human guilt, that there can be but one sentiment among all the holy myriads who witness the scene, expressed in the Amen that all shall give as the funeral sentence shall be pronounced!

4. *Consciousness* on the part of the condemned of the awful nature of the transaction, will be also one of the circumstances attending the funeral of souls.

Burial solemnities in this world are for the inanimate and the unconscious. Not so in the great funeral day of souls. Those, in that day, about to be buried, are fully aware of what is transpiring about them. They know where they are, and all the terrible facts of their position. They can *see* the Infinite Judge as he "comes in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory." The great white throne is in sight, and all the holy beings who compose that vast assembly. The opened volume—the language of accusation—the map of earthly life—the guilt with which they are defiled—the frowning face of Eternal Justice—they are conscious of all! Not one of the awful solemnities of the occasion is undiscerned, and not one but has a response of the soul's emotions in their utmost intensity.

We have read of the terrible emotions with which the supposed dead have been conscious of their own funeral solemnities; but here is that consciousness in circumstances infinitely more awful. Here are intelligent minds, in all the sensitiveness of rational existence, beholding their own funeral rites, and conscious of the tremendous fact, that the grave is nothing less than the bottomless pit!

5. In the world *men* execute the funeral solemnities of the departed, but in the funeral of souls *God himself is the Great Executor*. It is his voice that summons death and hell to give up their dead. It is he that charges the guilty with their rebellion. It is his voice that closes the scene with the sentence—"Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire!" This is a solemnity so momentous that he commits it to no created hands—he presides himself.

6. One other circumstance: there will be no *resurrection* of buried souls! We stand by the grave of the *body* and see it lowered to that resting-place. But it will come forth. At the sound of the trump of God it will arise.

But with the funeral of souls there can be no such associations. Here is a burial without a resurrection. "He that is unjust shall be unjust still." "These shall go away"—no voice will ever recall them. No being will stand by the side of that awful sepulchre, and penetrating its horrible midnight, cry, "Come forth!" Every spectator of that solemnity will recognise the *unchangeable* decision of the Divine Government. The burial of a guilty soul in perdi-

tion is a *final* transaction. Just as the funeral solemnities of the body in this world suggest and imply no return of the departed, so does the funeral of the soul imply no return. All the spectators will retire from that mighty sepulchre in the conviction that the buried are wrapped in the shroud of everlasting death!

Now let us take home to the deepest ponderings of our hearts, two facts:

(1.) That each of us will be *personally present* at the great funeral day of souls. What there will be of awful grandeur, and terror, and glory, in that day will be before *our* eyes. The Judge, the throne, the Book of life, the angels, holy and fallen, men redeemed and unredeemed—*we* shall *see* all this. And all that is to be *heard* that day, *we* shall hear—the voice of the Infinite Judge, the anthems of angels and saints, the wailings of the lost!

(2.) There is *danger* that then shall be performed the funeral solemnities *of our own souls*. Have *we* not sinned? And is not the penalty, death and consequent burial? Do we say we have escaped it by "repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?" These are elements of salvation; but how many have fallen into deadly delusion concerning them—have taken up with the form without the spirit: and, though confessors of Christ and numbered in Zion, are in as great danger as ever of final ruin! By the very side of that dreadful sepulchre, and on the funeral day, many will hear—many that thought all was well—will hear the startling announcement: I NEVER KNEW YOU!" Who of us has not occasion to search his heart, to inquire after the grounds of his hope, and to seek, with all possible earnestness, to escape so terrible a disappointment!

But have not the topics of this discourse met the eyes of some, in the consciousness of total unfitness for Eternity, since nothing effectual has yet been done for the safety of the soul? Bear with the kindness and plainness that tells you every sin you are indulging is aiding to weave the winding-sheet that will be used in the Great Funeral Day! You are making yourself ready for the solemnities of an everlasting burial! Indulged sin is bringing your soul into such a moral state, that there can be nothing done with it but to bury it.

Think too of this, you do not walk in darkness in reference to this great matter. God has sent you word about the great Funeral Day. He has drawn, in awful brightness, a picture of it, and made to stand out before you the prominent circumstances of that fearful scene. And all for the express purpose of so instructing and alarming you, as to prevent its becoming your own funeral day.

Oh, mariner on the sea of life, the beacon blazes before you, clear and bright, kindled by God's own hand. Will you not heed it? Will you go on to deal so unworthily with your Infinite Benefactor and Judge, that he can do nothing with your guilty soul but to call the universe to see the justice of its being buried in perdition?

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SERMON CCCCLXVI.

BY REV. ERSKINE MASON, D. D.,

Pastor of the Bleecker Street Presbyterian Church, New York.

NEW YEAR'S SERMON FOR 1848.

DEPENDENCE ON THE FUTURE.

"To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant."—ISAIAH 56: 12, *last clause.*

IF we have ever occupied some elevated and commanding position, we must have observed, that the scenery, at a great remove from us, far surpassed in beauty that which was directly under the eye. The spot we descried far off in the mighty distance, was of all others the most interesting; and we have sometimes thought that could we but reach that spot, we might settle down with perfect content, because there we should find none of those anxieties and discomforts which mar almost every scene in which we mingle.

We are all aware that there is deception here, and we explain it upon this simple principle, that in the distant perspective we really perceive only an outline, which our imagination fills up and colors. I allude to this, as an experience with which perhaps we are all perfectly familiar, and the explanation of which as thus given, we are ready to admit. Now, I do not lay an interdict upon this play of human fancy, or say, that it is wrong ever to allow the mind to follow it and to be amused with its beautiful delineations. I would not condemn the indulgence of imagination, any more than the exercise of memory or of judgment; a day dream may be very pleasant, and the most fanciful reveries can never harm us, if they do not affect us improperly towards sober realities. But, should the tendency of such fancy pictures, and such visionary enchantments be to disgust us with the objects around us, and make us dissatisfied with the circumstances amid which Providence has called us to move, should they indispose us toward the duties of our present station, or lead us lightly to

estimate, if not utterly to neglect the advantages which belong to it, then imagination becomes the master, instead of the servant of judgment, and the sooner its spell is broken and its enchantment dissolved, the better for our interest as well as our enjoyment. How idle, how ruinous is it to everything like peace of mind, to be perpetually sighing after the fancied beauties of some distant, and perhaps inaccessible habitation, and thus to become indifferent to the realities and dissatisfied with the comforts of one's actual home.

It must be evident to every one, that what is thus true of space, is equally true of time. The coloring which fancy throws over the distant scenery of nature is no more beautiful, nor captivating than that which hope throws over the perspective of the future. How apt we are to live amid coming scenes. How constantly do we find ourselves forming our calculations, and laying out our plans for futurity, and rejoicing, by anticipation, in pleasures we have yet to reach—thus are we perpetually framing, and peopling with images of our own creation the worlds in which we expect to dwell. "To-morrow," we think, "shall be better than to-day." The scenes before us are brighter than any which are past, or present—the results yet to be evolved, grander and richer, than any which have been developed; the enjoyment expected more intense and permanent, than any we have hitherto experienced. Thus we make up the deficiencies of the present, by the anticipations of the future; our enjoyment to-day is owing to the vision of to-morrow, our happiness is the creature of our expectations, and hope gives us fortitude for endurance, and energy for action.

Now you do not understand me as finding fault with this peculiarity of our nature, a peculiarity belonging to us, as we came from the hand of our Creator, or as denouncing the impropriety and wickedness of forming plans for the future. We might as well try to put an arrest upon the movement of the natural world, as to prevent man from looking forward; we cannot help it, and if we could, religion forbids the indulgence of an improvident spirit.

And yet, there is a distinction to be maintained, between the right exercise and the perversion of any faculty of the human mind. There is nothing wrong in the simple exercise of hope—nothing foolish or criminal in the anticipations of the future. But when our expectations, as immortal creatures, are altogether earthly, when they are connected with irrational, because unfounded, confidences, when our calculations for the future lead us to overlook or underrate privileges or advantages actually in possession; when they lead us to neglect the duties of to-day under the impression that they may much more easily, and in a better manner be performed to-morrow; when, in short, hope becomes the

parent of procrastination, then are we living under an influence which controls us only by means of its deceptions, and which must be disastrous, as it can end only in disappointments, painful and bitter, as our calculations have been confident, and our hopes sanguine.

The state of mind I have thus set before you is the one to which the words of my text give expression, and one against which the whole strain of inspired teaching is directed. The word of God comes home to us, rebuking these strong confidences and inordinate hopes for the future, by telling us that they are wholly unfounded, since we do not know whether the developments of that future will honor one of our confidences, meet one of our calculations, or answer one of our hopes. This is the argument of inspiration, and yet of all arguments, it is perhaps the most difficult to commend to the human mind. Who of us does not find it almost impossible to entertain the thought which it involves? Who of us can bring himself to think, that his wisest and best digested plans may come to naught, his strongest confidence prove to be utterly worthless, and his longest cherished and most sanguine hopes be entirely blasted? And yet this is the sentiment which the Bible would have us to understand and incorporate among our elements of thought and feeling; and it strikes us that we can never ponder it so well as upon an occasion like the present. We occupy to-day* a position which commands the past, where our thoughts naturally run back over the scenes which have been enacted and the events which have transpired, and where we can gather up the lessons of the months which have fled, and as we study them, see how clearly they illustrate and impressively enforce the sentiment before us, as they throw the light of facts upon the vanity of most of our future confidences.

We would carry you then to-day in pursuit of our general object, amid some of the walks of ordinary life over which you have already travelled, and where yet we find you. We enter the scenes of earthly business, and we hear from many directions and from many lips the utterance of complaint, as we see many signs of dissatisfaction, if we are not compelled to listen to the sighs, and groans of a deep and bitter disappointment. But a short time since, in these same circles, and upon these same walks, everything was different. There were joyous faces and sanguine hopes. There was one, perhaps, who should have talked of our melancholy and misanthropic spirit, had we attempted to throw in a suggestion of doubt between his mind and the vision which entranced and captivated him. Borne high by hope upon the wave of prosperous experiment, he feared no mountain-billow which might overwhelm him, he dreaded no hidden rock upon which his proud bark might strike, and be dashed to pieces. But

* The first Sabbath of the year.

we come to him now and ask him how the event compares with his previous confidence? Where are his plans and enterprises, now—those wondrous plans which were certainly to evolve such happy results, and upon which his heart was set so strongly? Events wholly unlooked for, and aside from every one of his calculations, have changed the aspect of everything, to him. The foundation upon which he stood, perhaps has gone, he feels that his confidence has deceived him. Is there to be found in this world a human being who ever rightly anticipated the changes which have actually taken place in his own personal history? Is there one, let his powers of calculation, and skill in management be ever so great, the course of whose affairs has been in accordance with his preconceived views, his sanguine expectations, and his distinct and confident prophecies? The most sagacious statesman, the most wily politician, the man of clearest and far-reaching forecast, has been utterly disappointed, no less than the man of the weakest intellect, and, I had almost said, of the most thoughtless improvidence. And what does it all mean? How are we to explain the unexpected changes which constantly take place, the disappointments which so often try and even break the human spirit? Are they mere fortuities, the results of accident or lawless chance, furnishing no salutary or impressive lesson for the human mind to study? This is entirely too atheistical. No! there is a God, who reigneth in the earth, and he has been moving unseen amid the elements around us, controlling and regulating all things. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground, nor a hair from our heads, without his notice, nor without design. And the movements which are constantly taking place, defeated plans, blasted hopes, withering, crushing disappointments, are but the rebukes which a God of Providence is administering to the spirit which so constantly controls us, as it whispers in our ear, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and yet more abundant."

The world is full of illustrations of my general thought. The difficulty with us is not to discover them, but to make a selection from the mass which lies on every side around us. I do but tell you that with which you are already familiar, when I say with regard to every man, that his circumstances are scarcely in any one point of view, what a short time since, he confidently expected they should be. We have all of us been carried along sometimes unconsciously, but always really, by influences which never entered into any of our calculations, and have passed through changes, against which, as we did not foresee them, we could make no provision. It is not a morose and ascetic spirit, which has often represented human life as a collection of disappointments. Every one has, to a greater or less degree, found out from his own experience the truth of the representation. We often fail entirely even of pursuing the ends which we originally con-

templated, as we certainly do, of the points which we expected to reach. I start out for action with all my plans well laid; I advanced a step or two, when a circumstance very trifling in itself changes all my determinations, and in a little while I am surprised to discover how totally different from my original intention, is my present course.

Thus a man finds himself in very different circumstances from those in which he expected to be; the place of his residence is not where he thought it should be. His character, perhaps, is the very opposite to that which he intended to form. He means to be honorable by emulating the course of one who had gone before him, and who had reached the highest point of earthly distinction; and yet, how it happens he cannot tell, he is astonished and broken-hearted as he sees others pass by him in the race, and seize upon the objects on which he had fixed his eye, and which he fondly hoped ere long to reach. He means to be rich, and plans accordingly, and yet he finds himself struggling onward with a bare subsistence, and perhaps not even securing that, while another, of far less sagacity in planning, and less energy in execution, whose prospects were not so flattering as his own, amasses the fortune which he expected to gather, and rides by him in all the pomp and pride of gilded splendor. Whatever may be his end or whatever his measures to reach it, he thinks the world is full of good and moves forward without suspicion and without fear; but he very soon finds that it is not always a friend who looks pleasantly upon him; that the smile of apparent approval is not an evidence of good will, and that professions may be falsified and promises broken as easily as made. To be dependent upon others is to be friendless; to need assistance is to be almost sure of its refusal. Oh! how different is all this from his wishes, his plans, his hopes! Thus are the darling schemes and fondest anticipations frustrated, as time rolls on and evolves events. Sagacity contrives, patience matures, industry laboriously executes, and disappointment smiles at the fabric which has been so curiously reared and so beautifully adorned, and at the moment its completion is expected, the stern hand of reality sweeps the whole away, or leaves only the ruins to tell of its former existence.

Scarcely different is the result in those cases where the issue of our course is in exact accordance with our previous plans. Success crowns our efforts, we reach the point we had in view, we seize the object at which we grasped, and yet we are creatures of disappointment. We thought that if we could attain a particular spot, or gain a particular object, or put ourselves in a particular position, we should need nothing more to fill up our cup of joy. We have amassed our gold, we have reached our eminence, we have secured our fame, we have built up our reputation, yet

neither wealth, nor position, nor fame, is what we expected to find it. We are depressed in the midst of our joy, disappointed in the midst of our success, we are as far removed from happiness as ever, and we sicken and pine in view of the proofs which our own experience is furnishing us of the vanity of human confidences.

I surely need not stop to defend the appositeness of these illustrations of my general thought, taken from our temporal circumstances, for I have been but detailing an experience with which, to a greater or less extent, all are perfectly acquainted. You feel not only the truth of what I have uttered, but the forcefulness also with which that truth demonstrates the emptiness of all earthly dependence; and perhaps not a day passes which does not heave into being something to contradict the lying spirit which tells us, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant."

We pass, then, from the natural to the spiritual world, and seek there also for illustrations. It is one of the common-places of human thought, that the scenes of the present have an intimate connexion with, and important bearing upon, those of a future world. We are passing onward through a day of probation, and through the events of time, to the hour of retribution and the realities of eternity. The fact here stated makes, generally speaking, but a feeble impression, and yet there are times when it takes a deep and strong hold upon the mind, and awakens the most painful emotions. No thought can be more dreadful than that of an eternity unprovided for. A sense of hopelessness, ascertained and utter, is so dreadful, so unnatural, so crushing, that not one of us could endure it unrelieved, a single hour. Oh! how a feeling of despair unhinges the mind, furrows the countenance, and gives wildness to the eye. Who in this world knows anything of despair, in reference to the world which is to come? And yet there are but few, if, indeed, any, who consider themselves in every respect prepared for an exchange of worlds. The most spiritually-minded and devoted Christian finds, upon an examination of his heart and circumstances, that there is something he wishes to do, some attainment he must make, some duty he must perform, before he can consider himself prepared for his last account, and he is often calculating with a good degree of confidence, upon making that attainment and discharging that duty before he shall hear his summons to the judgment-seat.

It is worse than this with the man out of the kingdom of God. What can be more terrible than a hopeless death? From what does the mind shrink more instinctively than the thought of putting one's head upon a dying-pillow, without an interest in Jesus Christ, and sinking into one's last sleep without any comforting presage of the future? Unconverted men will bear me witness that they do

not expect to die as they are, and unchanged to enter upon a scene of eternal realities. Nothing is more distinct to their apprehension than their entire unfitness for such a wondrous transition, and an alteration in their character and position is embraced among the most confident of their hopes. They have more than once given promises to this effect to a wakeful and a remonstrating conscience, and have perhaps most distinctly, most deliberately, and I am sure most sincerely, formed their plans and matured their purposes. They intend to be Christians before they die. Now what does this mean? What disclosure does it make concerning their state, if it does not show them lying in the lap of the enchantress who borrows her witchery from the fascinations of the future, and charmed into composure by the soft notes which she sings, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." Here is a vain expectation leading a man to overlook his present advantages, and neglect his present duties, and to decline doing that which he knows and feels ought to be done to-day, upon the strength of the deceitful presumption, that he may do it much more easily to-morrow.

Now, at this very point, I would have you to pause a moment and look back upon the past, and see if you cannot gather from its lessons a powerful rebuke of this prevalent spirit. I address the Christian, and ask him, in all kindness, if his condition in a spiritual point of view to-day is at all answerable to his previous hopes and calculations? Tell me, you who are in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, is there one of you who has discharged all the duties he meant to discharge, or has made all the attainments he intended to make? Are you the spiritually-minded disciple you expected to be upon this first Sabbath of the year? And yet we all formed our plans, as we thought, with a great deal of wisdom. It may be that we began their execution with some good promise of success, but some trifling circumstance, some slight but unexpected change in our earthly condition, our relations or our position, intervened, diverted our attention, and altered the whole current of our thoughts, and by subjecting us to new trains of influence, led us to other and different plans, and our purposes of spiritual improvement, if they have not been wholly forgotten, remain wholly unexecuted.

It is precisely so with unconverted men. They can remember the searching exhibitions of Divine truth which poured light in upon their minds, and the touching, and tender, and powerful appeal of the gospel which awakened strong emotions in their bosoms. They can remember, perhaps, hours of deep distress, when their spirits were bowed down and almost crushed by the dispensations of Providence, as those whom they most loved were taken away from them, or as God had to do with their conscience;

and they felt the fearfulness and painfulness of sin. There were purposes then, intelligent and solemn, of repentance and obedience to Christ, and they have not been "few and far between." They mark, at very short intervals, the path upon which men travel, and present themselves now in such numbers to the memory, that they can hardly enumerate them. Go back then, if you please, to some foregone moment of your existence, some of those impressive scenes, or some of those hours of thoughtfulness to which we have alluded, and endeavor to call up, as distinctly as you can, the exercises which then belonged to you, and as your memory traces them with a faithful pencil, bear with this simple question, Did you expect that this first Sabbath of the year should have found you out of the kingdom of God, without a hope for the eternal world, and with so little interest upon the subject of the great salvation, and so utterly unmoved by your dreadful neglect of it? And has the past no lesson for *you* to learn? Does it throw no light upon the developments of the future? As you see how its confidences have deluded, and its promises deceived you, and betrayed your too pliant and trustful spirit into the hands of him who would destroy you, you need no argument from me or from any one else, to show you the folly of trusting to the morrow; or if you do, you can have it, as the picture of the past is thus held up to your view, and its powerful appeal against false trusts, tells upon your spirit. No! no! you need no other argument than this. So far as religion is concerned, you are to-day a disappointed man, and your present condition is as diverse from all your plans and calculations as it could have been, had you aimed at results directly the opposite of those your intentions contemplated.

This, however, is not the only light in which human disappointments must be studied; there is another, more solemn and more painful. All our calculations for the future proceed upon the presumption of future life. We expect to live, and so, at least, to have time to carry our purposes into execution. And yet I take it upon myself to say, that amid all our calculations not one can be found so rash as this. I feel when I utter this sentence, involving, as it does, the thought of the uncertainty of human life, that I am addressing myself to (of all others) the most difficult service I am called to perform. The subject is in its own nature so trite, its illustrations are so common-place, because it has been made a theme of such incessant declamation; it is, moreover, in every view of it, so familiar, and withal so distasteful, that we feel oppressed when we speak of it, and would resign our duty, if we dared, into other hands.

But we cannot do so—an obligation rests upon us, and however painful, we must discharge it. Constrained then by a sense of duty, though we must repeat what has been a thousand times

aid upon a subject which for ages has had no novelty about it, ve must speak, relying simply upon this confidence, that he who ias "ordained by the foolishness of preaching to save them that elieve," can carry home the best known truths to the conscience n such a manner as to render them more effectual than those ipon which we most rely, as seeming to give us the best promise f success.

We were speaking of the vanity of confidences for the future n view of the uncertainty of human life; and we would have you urn over only a few leaves in the volume of history, and read heir contents. Of those who began life with you, how many, think ou, are remaining? See, I beseech you, how the ranks of your arly associates have constantly thinned out. Your hearts, it may e, have bled, as one and another, and a third have been cut own by your side, of those in whose society you delighted, and vith whom you took counsel as to your earthly plans and inte-ests, or shared your earthly joys. And yet their confidence in ife was as strong as is yours now; their plans were as well laid, heir hopes as sanguine, their prospects as bright, as are yours now; nd while, as it is now with you, the future stretched itself out efore them, filled with scenes, and peopled with the images hich an ardent fancy had called into being, and they were has-ening with eager impetuosity to seize upon the bright objects hich dazzled their vision, some sudden stroke laid them low, nd terminated their earthly course and their earthly hopes toge-her.

Or go into the silent and solemn graveyard, and as you tread, n every side, upon new-made graves, upon which as yet per-aps not a blade of grass has grown, ask yourselves how many of hose who are sleeping there in the stillness of the sepulchre xpected that this day should find them the prey of worms, and he victims of corruption.

Amid that throng, which, only during the past year, has gone own to people the mansions of the dead, there was a young man, mother's pride and a father's hope. His youthful mind had een early imbued with religious truth, and that truth had been o fastened upon his conscience by parental instruction and pa-ental prayer, that he could not disengage himself from its influ-nce; and he had his plans and purposes of repentance, but "to-orrow" sounded very sweetly, and charmed him into forgetful-ess of them, while he had yet one thing to accomplish—one arthly plan to execute, one transient joy in which to participate, nd with which he thought religion would interfere; and there he ies beneath the clods of the valley, while his spirit has gone with s unfinished plans and unfulfilled purposes, to the God who ave it. And there is an epitaph which records the name and ge of some child of fashion, who forgot her God, amid the frivo-

lities of earth, who was too much engaged with the vanities and idolatries of the world to think of that Saviour whose voice she could not but hear, and whose love she could not but feel to have been great.

And there is another, the man of business, cut down in the prime of life, hurried away from scenes of enterprise and action, from those unfinished undertakings which engrossed his soul, and which he thought he might safely complete, before he gave his attention to eternal things; and there is yet another, the man of three-score years and ten, who had oft "resolved and re-resolved, yet died the same." The bridal wreath has been exchanged for the winding-sheet, the hue of health for the pallid aspect of death, the hurry and excitement of worldly business and pleasure for the stillness and repose of the tomb. There are no circumstances in which we can be placed, where a voice from the past does not reach us; not a confidence, however strong, in reference to which a voice of warning does not come to us from some new-made grave, to caution us against the folly of trusting to to-morrow.

Of how many disappointments, during the last year, think you, does God's book of remembrance keep the record?—and disappointments, too, deep, bitter, fearful, because eternal;—disappointments, compared with which life's heaviest trials are lighter than vanity—the disappointments of human spirits who expected much and have been reft of everything, who have failed of the great salvation, which they never intended permanently to neglect, who meant to rise and live in heaven, but who sank, and made their bed in hell.

And oh! how many of you are treading in their footsteps to reach a like disappointment. I know you could not feel as you do, and act as you do, but for your strong confidence in to-morrow. I admit, there is wonderful power in temptation. I admit, there is great fascination in the things of time and sense; and the tendency of earthly objects is to engross the soul. But then there is a greater power in the things of the world which is to come. There is mightier fascination about the brightening glories and flashing fires of eternity. There is that in the verities of the gospel which can take a stronger hold upon the mind, if they were but looked at. And every man may break the power of this world, and bring himself under the mightier influence of eternal realities, if he would but possess himself of this conviction:—These realities are just before me. Yes! this is the secret of men's carnality and neglect of the gospel—"To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant."

If we could certify to our hearers that they had but a month, or a year to live, they could not devote this month, or this year, or any part of them, to pursuits which would shame them at the judgment-seat of Christ. You should not, any of you, be inat-

tentive to the exhortation of to-day—you should not continue indifferent to the subject of religion, and trusting to to-morrow, if we were gifted with a spirit of prophecy, and could show to each individual the exact time he had to live, if we could show to all, that men should tread upon their sleeping dust, before the earth should have performed another revolution. We cannot do this, but we can say to some, The close of this year shall find your bodies in the cold damp sepulchre. Can you believe it, and yet be unconcerned about the eternal world? But because you know we cannot compute the moment, the hour, and the day of your death—because we can only tell you that life is short, and you can be here for a few days, perhaps—you can venture to live as though you should be here for ever. No, we cannot point out the day, the month, the year, when you shall close your earthly course, we have no revelation on this point from on high—and, I may add, we need none, to assure us that some will die during this year upon which we have entered, we know this without any inspiration from above; we *know* that some who are living to-day will be in the sepulchre when this anniversary returns; and we very much fear that some of you may illustrate the truth of God's word, "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." Oh! what words are those to describe the mode of a sinner's departure into the eternal world! It may be so with you, I warn you of it, *you* may be "driven away in your wickedness." If you are not Christians, no mortal eye may see your struggle, and no mortal tongue may be able to tell of the violent instrumentality necessary to dislodge you from this world. There may be no outward painful manifestations, but there may be an invisible wrestling—and a dreadful inward struggle, like that of one who feels an iron grasp upon him—We do not know who or when it shall be—God be thanked that we do not. We cannot tell when any one of us shall step upon another scene. We know only that any of us may soon do so, at any time, and anywhere. Where is the dread threshold of the court of our eternal judge?—Anywhere! everywhere! Some of us will cross it this year. That point will not be questioned by any who put confidence in the revelations which the experience of the past furnishes—and if it is so—if it is certain that some of you must die this year—you will not, you cannot, be guilty of the madness of throwing upon the future the work of your repentance—while God calls upon you to make your calling and election sure, you will not answer "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." To-morrow! that voice may not be heard. To-morrow! see those poising scales in which your destinies are placed, and that hand just ready to strike the balance. See that opening grave—it has been dug for you—and on that spot, where shortly you shall lie, stands the long suffer-

ing Son of God, holding back the destroying angel, while he pleads *with* you and *for* you—you cannot be deaf to his entreaty "Come, sinner, haste, O! haste away, while yet a pardoning God is found." And while you listen, there is another voice, how solemn its message, how startling its tones! It is the voice of one who moves amid the tombs—and as he points to the graves, where lie the wrecks of once manly forms, the decaying tenements of once promising and procrastinating, but now ruined spirits, he says, "Thus will I do unto thee, and because I will thus do unto thee, prepare to meet thy God." Listen to it, ye young, ye middle aged, and ye old—listen to it—for ye are yet here. The summons has not yet gone forth for any of us—the stroke is not yet descending—the weaver's shuttle is yet playing—the eagle has not yet descended upon his prey—ye are in a world of hope—God waits to be gracious. Oh! ye who have been approached solemnly—who have been warned faithfully—who have waited long—ye who have met every argument, every entreaty, every appeal, with this same reply, "to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant"—see the great destroyer coming with your names written in his commission—and while you tremble at the summons he is about to utter, betake yourselves quickly to your closets, and there pour out your prayer, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

SERMON CCCCLXVII.

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THE END AT HAND.

But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.—1 PETER, iv: 7.

THE same Apostle says in another connexion, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." There are announcements very similar to the above, scattered throughout the New Testament. Paul, writing to the Philippians, exhorts, "Let your moderation be known to all men: the Lord is at hand." Writing to the Christians at Rome, he says: "The night is far spent; the

ıy is at hand." James, in his epistle, says, "Be ye also patient; ablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh:" the next verse, he says, "The Judge standeth before the door." ı the Revelation it is written, "He which testifieth these things ith, Surely, I come quickly. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

The question here arises, are these declarations true in the nse which the writers entertained when they penned them? Or, e we to suppose that they were permitted to cherish the error -an innocent one, some may think, that the coming of Christ to dgment was literally at hand? Let it be observed, that Paul :casionally uses language of the above import. "The Lord at hand." These things are "written for our admonition, upon hom the ends of the world are come." He seems to speak of e Resurrection as an event to occur in his own time. "The ɔrd shall descend, the trump shall sound; the dead in Christ all rise first; and then we who are alive and remain shall be ught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air." This, ıd other language of the Apostle, appears to have been interpret- l and understood by many to declare the speedy coming of the ɔrd; so that in another epistle, the Apostle charges them, "that ey be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit ɔr by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ ıeaning the great final day) is at hand." Then he goes on to y that it is not immediately to occur, there being some great ·ents to precede it. From this it appears that Paul certainly, ıd probably the other apostles, were not cherishing the belief, at the day of judgment was literally near. These declarations ·"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh;" "The Judge stand- h before the door;" "Behold, I come quickly;" "The end of l things is at hand;"—these and similar declarations were made arly two thousand years ago, and things have remained as they ɜre; there has been no Resurrection, no day of Judgment. At e same time, those declarations were intelligently made; they ɔre and *are* true.

In what sense, then, were they and are they true? It is mani- ɜt they had a meaning, and if they had, they still have a mean- g, which is consistent with what, two thousand years ago, was ə fact, and is still the common doctrine, that the great day of ıdgment is not absolutely and literally near at hand.

The language, obviously, has a reference to, and an accom- ishment in, successive, and somewhat differing events. The ɔrd is represented as coming in the overthrow of the Jewish ıte and polity. This was the winding up of the first great dis- nsation; the first grand period of the Church; indeed, the first and period of time. This came to its end by one of the most rful judgments God ever visited on any people. By some it supposed, that Peter, in his remarkable declaration—"The end

of all things is at hand," had reference primarily, to that appalling catastrophe and consummation. It is certain that Christ warned his disciples of this, his first coming for purposes of retribution. He gave them definite signs of his coming; and described that coming in language similar to that which is used to invest with majesty and terror his final advent. This consummation and overthrow was then literally at hand. It was an event of absorbing, yea, agonizing interest to every Jewish heart; and one which called for utmost vigilance and prayer.

Admitting this interpretation, the passage is not lost, in its palpable bearing upon us. The winding up of the first grand period of the world was manifestly and strongly typical of the far more sublime and awful winding up of the second. The first has passed: the end of the second is to come; it is coming; it is nearing. This is the literal meaning of the word translated *at hand*. The end of all things is nearing. The completion of the first is proof of the coming and the certainty of the second. The first coming of Christ, for retribution, in the manner he did, in exact accordance with his own uttered and recorded prediction, is proof that he will come a second time, at the end of the world, in the sublime and glorious manner described in the sacred record. Let any person of seriousness and candor read the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and compare it with the chapter in Josephus, in which that historian, an enemy to the Christian faith, describes the exact and literal accomplishment of our Savior's words, in which he foretold the events of his first coming: then let him read the twenty-fifth chapter, in which the same Lord Jesus foretells and describes his second coming for the purpose of final retribution of quick and dead, and it would seem he cannot resist the conviction, that his second and final coming will take place just as it is predicted, and the history and results of it will be written in the perfected redemption of the saved, and uttered and echoed in the deeper wailings of the lost.

The language, then, has an important meaning, a stirring significancy, as referring to the Lord's coming to judgment. As a great event, transcending and overshadowing all others; to the fixed gaze of faith, as it were, obliterating all others; ever coming, rapidly nearing, striding, even rushing on, it may be said to be at hand. Certainly, it appears so, to the mind so absorbed in the amazing contemplation as to forget, at the time, all other things. It is really so, in strict truth, when the line between this and the judgment-day is set off against the line which measures the eternity beyond. It is but a step—a point even, to the time when the trump shall sound, the judge appear, the tenants of the grave come forth, and pass the dread ordeal.

But to this great, this final ending, there are other subordinate endings. Death is the end of the world to him who dies; the

same to him as if all sublunary things were literally abolished. The glorious sun, the broad blue sky, the green earth, and the flowing streams, henceforth are nought to him; he will know them no more forever. With him, it is all ended; the most pregnant and momentous stage of his existence; that, on which the whole subsequent eternity depends, is ended. He has gone to his final account; gone to his eternal home. Amazing consummation to the spirit that departs. And how fast are spirits departing. Nearly thirty millions of these consummations occur every year; about eighty thousand occur every day; more than three thousand every hour. Almost every swing of the pendulum crowds a soul into eternity. In this way a whole race is soon gone. The world may remain as it is a hundred years from this; the sun, moon, and stars will shine with unabated brightness and beauty, but other eyes will see them; the eyes they now enlighten, the bodies they now warm and cheer, will abide in the darkness and corruption of the grave. To all now on the stage it will be ended; a whole race ended; we, as a part of it ended. May we not say then, and feel it as we say, The end is at hand. How quickly will it be upon you, and upon me, as an individual; this rushing flight of time, these thronging diseases ready to prey upon us, these shafts of the destroyer flying all about us, these wasting sands, this ebbing pulse, this tottering frailty, all say in the reflecting ear—mortal, to you the end of all things is near,—the termination of all earthly hopes and schemes, and pleasures, is near—the closing of all these changes, and the entering upon the stabilities of an eternal condition, is near; and not only near, but every day it is coming nearer; death is nearing; judgment nearing; eternity nearing; every step in life is a step towards the sepulchre; the next may be a step into it. This inflexible uncertainty adhering to our condition, gives, if possible, still greater force to the announcement of the text—near, nearing, but how near none can tell. To-day you may be well; to-night you may be contending with nature's great agony; to-morrow you may be dressed for your coffin. When I look at these facts, when I consider this life, how sure and how momentous its end; all worldly things, to the departing, ending with it; when I see how quickly a generation passes, as it were, crowded off by a new one rising up to take its place, this again to be crowded off and disappear as soon; one going, another coming, and all bringing on the great consummation; this final end, nearing, ever nearing, with the lightning-like speed of time, I do feel that there is a meaning, and a truth, and an amazing solemnity to the inspired declaration: the end of all things is at hand.

My next remark upon this passage, is: there being a meaning in it to us, it presents a motive for us; it is a great and permanent motive. This consideration of the end at hand has moved

thousands and myriads who were on the stage many centuries ago. Emphatically was it one of the great moving considerations of the early Christians. These two: first the cross, then the coming. They thought a great deal of Christ's coming, and the end. Their sustained fervor and engagedness were owing, in part, to their vivid apprehensions of the great winding scene. Their spirits were kindled and exalted by their visions of that coming glory and majesty. Could we look into the experience of those of every period, who have been eminently active and holy, and see the hidden springs of their piety, we should find, that like Baxter, they had been persons greatly affected by an approaching death and judgment.

The next point is, How is this motive to become influential, effective, in any measure proportioned to its greatness and solemnity? How has it been in the case of others? How is it to be in our case? Not, let me say distinctly, by believing in actual, literal nearness, or vicinage. There are some who seem to think that the great event is nothing, comparatively, as motive, if at a distance. If the judgment be a century ahead, it is of little consequence how we demean ourselves. We are to wake up and bestir ourselves, because, and only because, the scene is actually right upon us. I admit we should bestir ourselves, did we know death or judgment to be literally at our door; but not *only* for this supposed nearness. It is the very spirit and essence of brutish unbelief, to be affected only by a present, palpable event of this sort. There is no faith about it; we know there is a great deal of praying when death has come to summon the spirit away, but what is praying in sickness and death good for, if there were none in life and health? What is praying in a storm good for; what avails it, if there were none in fair weather? So in the final day; there will unquestionably be a great deal of praying when the graves are opening and the dead are rising, and the world is burning; but what will it avail? An event or motive of this sort made palpable, and brought right upon one with infinite and visible pressure, is enough to make a demon pray; and he would be a demon when he had done. But all the power of an event or scene which is to affect him, in the case of the considerate man, does not lie in the contact of that scene. It is, indeed, a solemn thing to die; it is also a solemn thing to live and look forward to the hour. It is a solemn thing to be laying by material for the judgment, as well as to be actually judged—to be treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, as well as to encounter its actual and dreadful infliction. On many accounts it would be better for me, that death strike me to-day, than that he delay the stroke a quarter of a century, and I pass and close that period in unrepented sin: better for me, that the arch-angel's trump summon me this hour before the great white throne, than that the

ime be delayed for me to make longer my line and blacker my ccount of guilt. O! that men felt more the solemnity of living; here is motive in living, as well as in dying.

But to recur to that great event—THE END; if not by believing n literal nearness, how is it to be made effectual as motive; I nswer, as has already been intimated, by the eye of faith looking directly upon it. In this way, it is brought near; it seems ear, but a step, indeed, to death and the judgment. Faith fixes pon the *certainty* of the event; what ever else may fail, this will ome. Death, judgment, eternity, are assuredly before me.

Faith considers the *uncertainty* of the time. None can divine he time. Men have tried to pry it up from the depths of an nrevealed secrecy—have made their confident calculations, some n this way, others in that; evolving, as they have thought, the itherto baffling intricacies of prophecy; and so the world has een told again, and again and again, when the trump shall sound, nd the judgment be set; but the event has always proved, and loubtless always will, that of that day and that hour, knoweth no nan. Faith looks upon it as a sudden, surprising event; which, when it does come, will come not by arithmetical computation, but as a thief in the night.

Faith fixes upon the grandeur and solemnity of the event, and its accompaniments. They will soon be here, and they will indeed be amazing—an amazing scene when the Son of Man shall appear in his glory, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels shall be round about him; and the damned coming up in chains from the pit; and all the dead coming forth from the opening graves; and all the living in a moment changed; the heavens rolling together like a scroll; earth and sea and the elements melting and burning; all nations together ascending to stand before the Son of Man; a part on the right hand, the remainder on the left; the former to hear—Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom: the latter to hear—Depart, ye cursed, into everasting fire; and the blessed go through the gates into the golden ity; and the doomed go down into the devouring flame, to be for ver with the devil and his angels. Truly, it will be a day of greatess and wonders, equal to all other days gathered into one. As aith fastens upon it, meditates, dwells, gazes thereon, the scene eeps nearing, and swelling out into greater magnitude; and while hus absorbed and admiring, the believing soul greatly longs for hat advent and that glory, and so hastens unto the coming of the ay of God—by the strength of hope and desire, as it were, leaping forth to meet it; all these, the faith, the fixedness, the desire, he grandeur of the scene, its rapid nearing, its certainty as to act, its uncertainty as to time, destined to burst forth upon an stonished world; these things, when realized, make out, we hink, a strong case—an unequalled pressure of motive.

And here, let me say, is where every man ought to live, with the end before him; death, judgment, eternity, the impending realities of his vision, often painting their mighty image upon the very retina of his soul. So living, how will he live? How will he be affected?

One thing is, his estimate of the present world will be exceedingly reduced and sobered. This estimate, as a general thing, is exorbitant, overgrown. Most think far too highly of the world. It glares upon men, bewilders them, and bewitches them. The difficulty is, it is not viewed enough as Paul viewed, when he said, "The fashion of this world passeth away." Let but this simple fact—it passes, the end at hand—be incorporated among the living, productive sentiments of the heart, and everything about it, every feeling toward it, and every action for it, will be changed. There will be a wonderful coming down and sobering of the whole view and feeling and pursuit. The man has simply come to understand the tenure. This is not my home; nothing here can be long retained. I am not to place my supreme regard upon this sin-deformed, this death-struck scene. I am not going to act the fool before the universe, in scrambling for the baubles of a moment, to the neglect and perdition of my undying spirit. I am not going to barter away the wealth of my immortality for the poor indulgence, the sorry debasement of an hour. Thus he loosens his selfish, his maddened grasp upon the world. The view we have taken goes to moderate all our earthly passions and griefs. Brethren, the time is short; it remaineth, that they that weep be as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they bought not; and they that use this world as though they used it not. Every earthly good will have receded; every earthly convenience have been abandoned, and every affliction forgotten in the oblivion of the grave.

The habit of dwelling beneath these impending scenes cannot fail to quicken the spiritual affections, and give new strength and intensity to the Christian's zeal. What a prize there is for him to win! what an inheritance! what a glory! In his near, full view of it, it seems wonderful, it staggers, it all but overpowers him. And yet he pants unutterably for that purity and glory. The soul, too, with its vast capacities, redemption, with its interminable results, appear to him in a new light, and call upon him with a new urgency. How many are the exposed; they are all about us; they are on the edge of the precipice; they are pouring into the dark abyss; thousands, and millions, to be saved soon, if saved ever. Christ, who died for them, and whose love you have felt, appeals to you, appeals to me: Go, carry my gospel; tell them of, and urge them to the place of refuge—the covert from the gathering tempest!

The Christian, whose eyes are open to these things—to that heaven, that hell, that Saviour, that Judge, that Judgment—all near, fast hastening on, if there be any life in him, will be moved to do something for his Lord. He will not, he cannot sleep, any more than he will be able literally to sleep, when all the dead are stirring in their graves. He will wake, and work, and he will pray God to bless his labor in the Lord.

Christian hearer, try and bring these matters home to your own heart, your own case. In a little, you pass away and are here no more. Are you ready? Is your work done?—done in your own soul? done in the field around you? so that the Lord will say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Most blessed approval at such an hour, before such a presence. Most dreadful and crushing will be the reverse: some will hear, "Thou wicked and slothful servant." So live and labor, watch and pray, in the season of effort and prayer, that the welcome, and not the woe, shall be yours; then shall you be for ever with the Lord.

Unconverted hearer, you are not prepared; and yet you may be on the brink of ruin. Have you thought of your situation, and of the scene you are to meet? Consider them now, wait not for a literal contact; wait not for the agitation and decay of a death-bed; wait not for the trump of judgment to stir your conscience and move your sensibilities. Ponder, till you feel the truth of that declaration, The end of all things is at hand. Though an old declaration; though it has been reiterated for centuries, uttered in ears that have long since mouldered, still it comes fresh and startling to you this day. It will come again. The end will be upon you sooner than you think. You may see it even now, speeding on like the heated courser; weeks, months, years, come and go; deaths, coffins, graves, crowd on the vision; an infinite stake hanging by a hair; the inexorable scythe swinging darkly across your path—how can you be so unconcerned? How can you sleep on, in such circumstances of immense and awful interest, and astounding peril? If persisted in, you are lost. Ere you are aware, will come the unwaking sleep of the shroud and sepulchre, and the soul, neglected, undone, will be driven down to the unsleeping tortures—the agonized, earthquake heavings of the second death. Fall not upon this doom, so dreadful; but turn at once and avoid it, and seek that other destiny, listening to mercy's call, and your soul shall live in heaven for ever.

SHORT SERMONS.

DANGER OF MAKING A PROFESSION OF RELIGION WITHOUT PIETY.

I never knew you.—MATTHEW 7: 23.

A PURE church is not to be expected on earth. Even in the time of the Apostles, when those who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven from Christ himself, were ministers, persons obtained access to the communion table, and were admitted to sealing ordinances, who had not the love of God. We have reason to believe there will be always tares among the wheat; foolish will be found mingled with wise virgins; the vile will be gathered with the precious in the gospel net. *Many*, we are told, in the last day, will *say*, *Lord*, *Lord*, *open to us*, who will be met with this appalling answer, "*I never knew you.*" From the description given of them, it is evident, professors of religion are intended.

My position is, that very few of those who are received among the visible followers of Christ without grace are ever brought to a knowledge of the truth. We read of hypocrites and false professors in scripture, but *never* of their conversion. I cannot conceive of a more perilous situation than that of one who has made a profession of religion unsupported by a good hope through grace, of one who, instead of making God his hope, makes hope his God. There is among all classes of thinking and conscientious persons, a well grounded apprehension of entering the Church without sufficient evidence of a spiritual, saving change.

I will point out some of the grounds of fear, that such persons will die in their sins. There is obviously a difference in point of danger, between those who are persuaded prematurely to assume so great a responsibility, through the injudicious solicitude of friends, and those who presumptuously or insincerely take the vows of God upon them. In both cases, however, the hazard is great.

1. There is a fancied security attending an enrolment of our names in the visible Church, which is greatly to be lamented and exceedingly dangerous. The pastor and Church have signified their approbation; and their acceptance has put to rest any previous fears, and for a time at least, quieted, if not removed, anxi-

ety and doubt. How is the vain confidence and false peace of such professors to be shaken? Is vice attacked? The force of education, or the apathy of natural constitution, or respect for character, keeps them from vicious habits. Is hypocrisy exposed and denounced? They are not aware of an intention to deceive; or of any guilt contracted by the heartless performance of duty. Any attempt on the part of the preacher to fasten conviction on the conscience, to break up false hopes, or to produce deep and godly sorrow, proves abortive; the heart is protected by a shield which no weapon can penetrate, wrapt in a covering which no hand can remove. The Spirit of God which alone gives efficacy to any means, operates through the medium of truth; but by them the force of truth is evaded, and its direct application turned aside. The longer, therefore, self-delusion is practised, and the appeals and searching messages of the Gospel are resisted, the greater the danger that the Spirit will be grieved, and the individuals given up to obduracy and blindness.

2. Another source of fear, that those who are in the visible Church will never truly turn to God, is found in the alarming truth, that the perversion of serious and solemn things has a tendency to produce peculiar hardness of heart and searedness of conscience.

A professor of religion, to be at all consistent, to hold a respectable standing among his fellow Christians, must daily engage in the performance of many holy duties. He must use the language of prayer. He must worship where Gabriel bows. He must meet the eye of God. He must speak unto the great King. He must read his word; attend upon the sacraments, and become conversant with scenes of awful interest. All this will exert an ameliorating influence upon a sanctified heart, and produce the happiest impression upon a pious mind. But no such results will follow where all is carnal and dead. The spirituality and the interest of the duties serve only to increase the insensibility of the conscience, and the sacredness of the subjects discussed and listened to, destroys the excitability of moral feeling. By becoming familiar with awful truths and hypocritically going through with solemn duties, the tenderness and purity of the soul are sullied and lost; religion is reduced to a cold and spiritless set of forms and observances.

3. Nor is this all. God is particularly offended with insincerity in the performance of religious duties. He "abhors the sacrifice where not the heart is found." There are frequent and unequivocal indications in the Bible of his displeasure against hollowness in Christian profession. The religion of the Gospel is a spiritual religion. *God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.* He requireth truth in the inward parts. Where sincere and supreme love doth not reign, he will not accept

the offering. His eye penetrates every fold of insincerity that covers, every unreal appendage that sets off, the performance of duty. How great the hazard then of provoking him to say, as in the case of his ancient people, *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? The new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even in the solemn meeting: and when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear.*

I will only add, in the conclusion, if there are any in the visible Church, in greater danger than others, they are those who are so little acquainted and impressed with the deceitfulness of the heart, and are so little alarmed at the idea of deception, as not to feel deep solicitude, and to institute the most faithful self-examination, and to endeavor, if possible, to gain some new evidence of a vital union to the Lord Jesus Christ.

HOW TO PRAY FOR A REVIVAL.

O Lord, revive thy work.—HABAKKUK 3: 2.

The duty of Christians to pray for a revival of religion is plain, and enforced by the most affecting considerations. The inquiry arises, how should Christians thus pray.

1. Christians should offer prayer for a revival, feeling their entire dependence on the Lord for such an event. They should be deeply impressed with the truth that revivals are commenced and carried forward by the life-giving and constraining influences of the Holy Spirit. However essential in its proper place is human instrumentality, Christians must deeply *feel* that such instrumentality, or any other, is utterly insufficient *of itself* to produce or promote a revival of true religion. Such a work is to be accomplished, "Not by might" (or armies and human strength), "nor by power" (i. e., human), "but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Every Christian, in praying for a revival, should be deeply imbued with the spirit of the Psalmist, when he gave the following directions to himself: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him."

2. They should feel that there is *great need* of a revival—of the blessing for which they pray. If they do not feel thus, they will not be very earnest in prayer. A sense of need is what makes a beggar importunate. It is when Christians, in looking over the

community, see iniquity abound, God dishonored, religion languishing, and sinners perishing in their sins, that they feel the necessity of a revival, and will be likely to plead earnestly with God for it. This is what led the Psalmist to pray, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?" This is what pressed upon the mind of the prophet Habakkuk, when he offered that oft-repeated and appropriate prayer, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, in wrath remember mercy."

3. Prayer for a revival should be offered *in faith*. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing that ye receive it, ye shall have it." An expectation of receiving what we pray for manifests confidence in God, leads to perseverance, and is the ordained condition to which an answer is promised. Faith in the promise of Christ is what led the primitive disciples to persevere in their protracted prayer-meeting for ten days, before the Pentecost. If our divine Savior has assured us that our heavenly Father is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children, have not Christians solid ground on which to rest their faith, when praying for this same Spirit, who is the Author of all true revivals, that he may be sent to revive us again? When we know that a revival greatly promotes the glory of God, and of course is in accordance with his will; and when we remember his promises to answer prayer, there seems no excuse for not offering the prayer of faith for a revival.

4. Christians should pray for a revival with *deep humility*. A sense of unworthiness as sinners, and as Christians, should lead them to lie low in the dust before the throne of grace, when asking for a visitation of the Holy Spirit. "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," was the language of one who had great faith, and whose prayer was answered. The lower they sink in their own estimation, the higher will their prayers ascend for the Lord's blessings.

5. Prayer for a revival should be offered with a *willingness to co-operate with God* in promoting it. While Christians should feel the Holy Spirit is the only efficient agent in revivals, they should be willing and ready to labor as zealously and perseveringly in their advancement as though revivals were their own work, and they were to succeed just in proportion to their skill and energy in promoting them. If Christians would offer acceptable prayer for a revival, they must do what they can to promote it. And unless they are willing to *do* as well as pray, they may as well stop praying.

6. Christians should pray for a revival with *importunity*. Let them remember the parable of the widow and the unjust judge,

where importunity overcame injustice and indifference. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you he will avenge them speedily." Let them remember the parable of the man who went to borrow bread at midnight, where *importunity* obtained what even friendship could not. Let them mark the success which attended the faith, the humility, perseverance, and importunity of the Syro-Phenician woman. Let them contemplate the prayers of Jacob, Moses, Elijah, and Daniel, where perseverance and importunity had power with God, and prevailed. Let them remember the promises which God has made to answer prayer: "Ask *and it shall be given* you; seek *and ye shall find*," &c. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, *I will do it*." "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask *anything* according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." "Before they call I will answer; and while they are speaking I will hear." With such promises as these before us, can we doubt the readiness of God to hear and answer prayer for a revival of religion? Let Christians get near the throne of grace, and wrestle with their heavenly Father, till he pour us out a blessing so great that there shall not be room to contain it.

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SERMON CCCCLXVIII.

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ANNIVERSARY SERMON.*

THE FATHERS AND THE PROPHETS.

Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?—Zachariah I. v.

That is a most solemn and responsible charge, under which, the ministry of reconciliation exercise their important office: "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O, wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way, to turn from it, if he do not turn from his way he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul." The business with which we are entrusted involves the destinies of eternity. Our function is to be exercised in such a manner that we may both save ourselves and them that hear us. Our message is not our own. We may not address to men anything as from ourselves; neither may we invent the themes and words to be proclaimed, nor may we keep back any part of that word which is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness,—"the whole counsel of God"—the message which *He* has commissioned us to bear to men, with all the force and authority of a commandment from Heaven, saying, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts."

In the exercise of our ministry, it is often our happy province to speak words of comfort and consolation: and the whole burden of our preaching is designed ultimately to publish glad tidings of good things, even the tidings of great joy. In the themes, the tenor and the spirit of this ministry, is included a dealing in patience and gentleness, such as that of a father

* We intend occasionally to furnish a sermon of this character; such reminiscences and appeals are replete with interest and instruction, and will waken an echo in a thousand families and churches.—Editor.

with his children. And yet, it does not consist in the mere "preaching of smooth things." Its charity is that which "rejoices not in iniquity, but in the truth." It must reprove, rebuke, and exhort—albeit with all long-suffering and doctrine; it must warn men of their guilt and doom, if they remain impenitent—yet with compassion and tears. In order to prepare men to appreciate its words of peace, it must show that there is no peace for the wicked, continuing such: and that they may be induced to take hold of eternal life, it must disclose to sinners how their feet already take hold on eternal death, and urge them to escape for their lives, and to flee for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope which is set before them in the gospel.

In this work, then, the servants of God must often utter the most unpleasant truths—press the most alarming considerations—wake up the most affecting reminiscences, and present to the conscience and the heart the most moving, and sometimes the most tender, and even delicate appeals. Such was the position of the prophet Zachariah, in the circumstances under which he uttered the affecting inquiry contained in our text. He was associated with the prophet Haggai in forwarding the enterprise of building the second temple. The people to whom they prophesied had been some years returned from the captivity; and already their sluggishness, in regard to the rebuilding of the Lord's house, their selfish worldliness, and manifold provocations, gave melancholy token that they were forgetting their afflictions, and relapsing into the footsteps of their fathers, whose sins the Lord had so disastrously rebuked. Haggai appeared upon the stage, a few months earlier than Zachariah, and seems to have produced a very salutary impression on the people by his preaching, and in illustration of that word, "he that hath, to him shall be given," so, as they had improved, and were obedient to the word of the Lord in the mouth of Haggai, God blessed them with another prophet, whose labors were longer continued: and, by these conjoint efforts, a very happy reformation was commenced, and the temple of the Lord was rebuilt. Nevertheless, because, during these ministrations, a portion of the people continued unmoved, and all of them were inadequately remiss, and their perverseness demanded the correction and stimulus of a constant faithful reproof and warning,—the best of them needing to be admonished against the error to which they were prone, of returning to the evil ways of their fathers—the prophet Zachariah addresses himself to "reprove their sins, and to threaten God's judgments against the impenitent, while he encouraged those who feared God with assurances of the divine mercies which were in store for his Church, and especially of the coming of the Messiah, and the setting up of his kingdom in the world." In pressing his exhortations, he strengthens his appeal by a direct and specific reference to a

most tender and delicate point—the controversy which God had had with their ancestry and predecessors. His mind goes back to contemplate the former generations, and he brings them forth from their graves, in order that in the light of their example, their children might see their own sinfulness, danger, and duty :—"The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers." And their history, and their own recent return from captivity, and the continuance, still, of a part of their nation in the land of their dispersion, were the melancholy and unanswerable proofs of the former delinquency, which they are now admonished not to imitate. By repentance they would cut off the entail of the curse, and, instead thereof, receive a blessing: and this is the true use to be made of the judgments of God upon the guilty generations that went before us. He calls them to turn unto the Lord—three times introducing, in immediate connection with the commandment, the authority and obligation which enforced it, as coming from the "Lord of Hosts," whose almighty power and sovereign dominion are thus set before sinners as an argument for their repentance unto new obedience. And the commandment itself now addressed to these backsliding people, is the very same which the prophets of old had often addressed to their progenitors. These all had passed away, but the word of the Lord, in its counsels, menaces, and promises, is the same in all generations, and abideth forever. It was their happiness that the same messages and exhortations still remained to address them that they might be directed, urged and encouraged to return unto God, be reconciled with Him, and He with them, and that they might possess His favor and friendship. It is the same message unto all men, and it speaks to us in the same words with which it spoke unto the fathers by the prophets, and in the latter days by the Son of God himself.

This appeal to the conduct and condition of their fathers, was a most delicate and difficult part of the prophet's duty,—because, if there is anything which men feel most tenderly, and are most apt to resent, it is such a refference to their parents as involves reproach, and implies that they suffered under the wrath of God, and after death, endure the vengeance of eternal judgment. But it is most needful, in dealing with men, to warn them of this very fact,—because they are prone to follow the example of their fathers, and to plead their authority for the sentiments they cherish and the conduct they pursue. But the prophet shrunk not from his duty. He knew too well that the authority of parents could not justify their children in wickedness and unbelief, and he felt his obligations to preserve their posterity from following in the same path to ruin. Therefore, he enjoins them "Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, * * * * but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord."

For, what was the consequence of their rebellion? "But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the Lord of Hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us." It is as if the prophet had said 'While you may object that it does not become you to be wiser and better than your fathers, consider what happened unto them. Although God's messages by His prophets did not take hold of them so as to reform them, yet the judgments of God, which were the threatened sanctions of his words and statutes, did take hold of them—(or *overtake* them, as it is in the margin,) and then they found by their own experience, that their unbelief could not make the word of God of no effect. When their calamities came upon them, they returned; some of them, perhaps, repented, and were saved; and others of them were convinced and awakened; and all of them changed their minds as to the truth and import of the teaching of the prophets; and, although it was too late to avert the ruin which came upon the nation, they were fain to confess that it had happened as it had been foretold; the Lord of Hosts dealt with them as he had forewarned them he would do, according to their ways and doings; and in all that he did unto them, they were compelled to acknowledge both his truth and his justice. *They were punished*, and felt and confessed that it was in righteousness. And now let their children and descendants behold the agreement and correspondence between the sin and the judgments of their fathers, and between the circumstances of their fathers and their own, lest they now, in turn, share a similar fate."

It is in the midst of this affecting recollection and expostulation that the preacher bursts forth with this impassioned and impressive exclamation—"Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?"

"What has become of your fathers? the whole generation is swept away, and the places that knew them shall know them no more. Let us think:—they are gone through the world and gone out of it. Here they *were*, in the places we now occupy, passing through the same streets, dwelling in these houses, trading in the same businesses, worshipping in the same churches. *But where are they?* They are not here;—they are gone; but they are somewhere still. When they died there was not an *end* of them. They are in eternity, in the world of spirits—the unchangeable world, to which we are hastening apace. Where are they? Those of them who lived and died in Christ are in PARADISE; and if we live and die in the Lord, as they did, we shall be with them soon—with them forever. And those of them who lived and died in sin, are in torment; and we are warned by Moses and the prophets, by Christ and

the Apostles, that we follow them not, so as to come to that place of torment."

"And the prophets, do they live for ever? Did those who spake the word of the Lord unto the fathers continue? They too have departed from the earth. Their *souls* do live, indeed, with God whom they served, in the faithful ministration of his word;" and the memory of their ministrations, and of the oppositions of unbelief, and of the fruits of repentance and faith, this still survives; and the word which they preached is still here, caught, with their descending mantles, when they ascended on high to their reward, by those their successors whose mouths still utter the words and statutes of the Lord of Hosts; and all the effects of their ministry survive, both in them to whom they were the savor of death unto death, and in them to whom they were the savor of life unto life. But the prophets themselves are gone. They served their generation by the will of God, and, with their generation, they have departed to meet again with their hearers at the bar of God, and to give in their account,—of some with joy—of others with grief, and all of them, both preachers and hearers, to test the truth of what those prophets believed and preached to those fathers.

Ah! if this truth were felt as its impressiveness and solemnity ought to make it to be felt, what preachers should we not be, and what hearers would you be! What an influence and force would be conveyed by every sermon. What scenes of spiritual interest would our worshipping assemblies present; what pains of conviction, what solicitude to be saved, what holy travailing of the new birth, what joy and peace in believing; what thronging crowds in the sanctuary, and what hopes of salvation, and what fitness for living, and fitness for dying, too, and what comforts and consolations abounding by Christ, and what looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, and what praises and services of the glory of the Lord of Hosts, even of our God and his Christ. Would to God there were its due weight given to this momentous consideration, that "we are dying ministers, dealing with dying men, about the concerns of immortal souls and an awful eternity, on whose very brink we are at this moment standing." For let us think, "the prophets that are now, do *we* live for ever?" No: as the fathers and the prophets of old have vanished from the earth, so must it be with us who occupy their places, and enter upon their labors, and inherit their means of grace, and succeed to their eternal responsibilities.*

You and I, my hearers, are concerned in this solemn truth. It is our case. The example before us, is, in too many particulars, the mere picture of our own condition. Not only in regard to our common mortality and destination to eternity, but

* For some of the language quoted in several of the preceeding paragraphs, I am indebted to Matthew Henry, slightly altered and expanded.

in the relations of many among us to a hitherto abused and misimproved gospel. To you also the word of the Lord hath spoken, saying—"Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts," as it was spoken unto you, and to those who have gone before you, by the former prophets, when they cried, saying: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, turn ye now from your evil ways and from your evil doings; but they did not hear nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord." "Be ye not as your fathers;" be not as ye have been yourselves. "Your fathers where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever?" As they have gone, so shall we go, so shall you go, so shall I, and this pulpit, and these pews, will be vacant of us; men may seek us, but they shall not find us here; and other prophets and other worshippers shall be here in our places; and where shall *we* be, when but a very few years shall have come and gone?

We cannot always preach for your salvation; *you* cannot always enjoy these means of grace; you cannot always pervert and disobey this gospel with impunity; you cannot always forget and despise, and misimprove, and turn a deaf ear to the things which you now so listlessly disregard. Oh, shall it be with you as it was with the Jews before the captivity, that you shall pass away, and as many who once were here have passed away, and leave no other memorial of your existence and of your treatment of the gospel, and no other example and ground of appeal to your children and others that are to come after you, than this, "Be ye not as your fathers were;" and than this passionate, and it may be, hopeless appeal concerning you, by some other preacher than he who now speaks, "Your fathers where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever?"

The whole subject thus introduced to our consideration, in this passage of the word of God, suggests to us a solemn and an affecting application to ourselves, in the circumstances in which we are now assembled in the house of God. Nor needs there much modification to make it suit as a description of ourselves.

It is now seventeen years since I first appeared, in the dew of my youth, in the character of the ordained pastor of this people, and my first sermon in this responsible relation was from these words: "I determined not to know anything among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified." To that determination I have adhered in all good conscience unto this day, when I am now preaching my three thousand and first sermon since my ministry commenced, and, excluding all other service of the gospel elsewhere, my two thousand three hundred and twenty-first sermon to this congregation. In this ministry I have sought to unfold the glorious gospel of the blessed God. I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. I have set before you life and death. Courting no man's favor, fearing no man's frown, seeking only to please you for your

edification, I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you publicly, and from house to house, as I had opportunity, testifying unto you all, without exception, repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. And I call God to record, and I call you to record, that in this thing I am pure from the blood of your souls and of all men. I have endeavored, alas! how feebly, and with manifold imperfections and sins, to serve the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations which befell me. Neither would I count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And I may appropriately add the words of the apostle, which immediately follow the text of my first sermon as your pastor: "And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching wsa not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." "Nevertheless, having obtained help from God, I continue even until now." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles."

Seventeen years have passed since then! It is half the lifetime of a generation, and this measure of time has been amply illustrated here. Many changes have passed since then. The whole appearance of this part of our city has been greatly altered and beautifully enlarged and improved. The former tabernacle in which you and your fathers worshipped,—in which many of you were baptized, and in which many of you have participated in soleme, and joyful scenes, and services,—has been taken down, and this spacious and beautiful temple has been reared in its stead. But it is not of such changes I would speak.

There is, too, a vast change in the appearance of this congregation. How many new faces appear which were not here seventeen years ago. And how many who were children then, are now grown up, and become the fathers and mothers of other children. And some who were not then born, have since been born again of water and of the Spirit of God; and have claimed their places, by the side of their parents as heirs, together wit h them, of the grace of life.

But there is yet another change. Half a generation of time is the measure of these years, and half a generation of human beings has passed away! Half of those who were living seventeen years ago, are dead. Look into the world around us.

and see where are the greater half of them who walked these streets seventeen years ago; and of the men who were then eminent for rank and wealth, for fame and power, for station and influence, for guiding and governing, both in Church and State? Kings, Presidents, Rulers, Ministers, Elders, Teachers; and fathers and mothers in Israel, and fathers and mothers of families, and the fathers and mothers of some of you—these, and uncounted children and youth have passed away!

It is not unusual on such occasions as the present, to enumerate mere statistical matters—to exhibit a summary of sermons and marriages, baptisms and funerals—of the increase and decrease of communicants, of colonizations and contributions for the enlargement of Zion; and perhaps in all this there may be a little self-glorification on the part of the minister, while he flatters the pride of his Congregation. But there is one item of statistics worthy to be noted in our review, and that demands to be pondered. What a contribution, and in what a light does it appear, when we sum up this day the ravages of death among us. Look around you—into the bosom of your own families, and among the circles of your friends and neighbors, and see how, and of whom this sum has been made up. Where are the dear familiar faces, which once greeted you? Ah! my friends, I am answered by the sombre habiliments of woe, by downcast eyes, by flowing tears,—and, when I go into your houses, by fondly cherished mementoes and relics, and affecting reminiscences, and the lingering sighs and words which still preserve the memory of them whose seats are vacant at your board. Yes; what a contribution is this, that we have rendered to eternity, made up of one half of our congregation; what a colony have we sent off,—full one half of ourselves, already become emigrants from earth, to people that solemn world, that unseen country which men enter through the gloomy portals of the grave!

I look around this house. Cast your eyes around it, too. And what a melancholy change is here. Where are those venerable heads, long familiar to our eyes; where are the fathers, the last relics of the former generation,—the men who took the lead in calling, and welcoming me, when I first came among you? I remember well, how I was interested on becoming first acquainted with this congregation, by the sight of so many, old, grey-headed men, who worshipped here seventeen years ago,—men, whom your memory and mine honors, because their hoary hairs were that crown of glory which invests the head of the aged, when they are found in the way of righteousness. And strange though it might seem, that a mere stripling should for that very reason, undertake to be the religious instructor of a people among whom were so many who were long before me in Christ,—yet those hoary-headed men, who took me by the hand and welcomed me so cordially.

were no small inducement to me to undertake the pastoral office here. Among them, I thought to find rich experience, and wise counsel, and genuine Christian sympathies with the toils, and trials, and difficulties, and the conscious inexperience of a ministry begun in so important a charge, in so extensive a parish, and as the successor of such men of God as had hitherto fulfilled the pastoral office here. Nor was I mistaken. I found in these men all that I respected, all I hoped for. And many are the pleasant and affecting reminiscences of their judicious and affectionate advice, assistance, intercourse, and friendship. But let us look around; seek for those familiar faces—your fathers and patriarchs, so vividly present to our memory and to our mind's eye. Ah! it was but lately, and they sat here, and there, and all around us.* * * * The memory of them all is fragrant here. We look around, as if to see them in their accustomed places; but we cannot see them, they are not here, to-day; but there are swelling hearts here, to echo, and to answer the inquiry, "Your fathers, where are they; and the prophets do they live for ever?"

Alas! they are gone! And yet, shall we weep and break our hearts in the selfishness of our bereavement, because we shall see their faces no more? Shall we stand stupefied and amazed, like the bereaved Elisha for the rapt Elijah, when we can call to mind how we saw many of them ascending to heaven, as it were in chariots of fire, and with horses of fire,—and vent our grief as he did; "My father! my father! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." These have gone to their reward. And He who gave them to his Church, is still its living Head; and He is Head over all things for the Church, to furnish other lively stones, and other workmen, for the upbuilding of his spiritual temple here. But many others are gone; those who, as our seniors in age, or even merely as our predecessors in death, might be included in the inquiry to-day; "The fathers, where are they?" Half a generation here,—half a congregation dead! And where are they? Those of them who died in the Lord, are with God to-day, and with the Lamb, and with the general assembly and Church of the first-born in heaven,—"where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,"—and there they shall be forever with the Lord, in the kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world. Those of them who died in their sins,—who refused the gospel, and obeyed not our Lord Jesus Christ,—where are they? They, too, have gone; gone to judgment and retribution; gone,—we *must* speak the word of the Lord,—to their own place, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and the dreadful gulf of hell, which separates the wicked from the righteous, is eternally impassable!

* We omit a paragraph containing a touching record of individual histories; of departed wisdom and piety, and worth, once enjoyed, and now lamented by this people.—Editor.

Half a generation gone! and then beside, to think that while we are but separated from this one half of our own generation, by the narrow stream of death, over which all of us must pass, the process of transition is still going on, every moment; even now, we, the other half, in one continuous train, are transferring to eternity; while we speak, the passage is uninterrupted:

> "Part of the host have crossed the flood,
> And part are crossing now;—
>
> "How many to their endless home,
> This solemn moment fly—
> And we are to the margin come,
> And soon expect to die."

Ah!

"And the *prophets*, do they live for ever?" This inquiry is important, not only as we consider the affecting thought of their mortality, but, as we revert to the ministrations of former pastors here, and ask what has been the influence of this whole catalogue of pastors and teachers sent unto you, until this day? what has been their influence upon *your* character and prospects for eternity, who still survive? Some of you heard the gospel on this spot, from the lips of the venerable and sainted Rogers and M'Knight, now gone to their rest, but who being dead, yet speak; and from the lips of their venerable colleagues, Miller, who stands upon the verge of fourscore, and Milledoler, who has also closed the stated labors of ministry of more than half a century. Some of you were baptized by their hands. Others of you have heard that gospel from the lips of their successors, now separated from this charge, and not likely often to utter it to you again. And for seventeen years, for more than two thousand times, you have heard it from these lips that speak to you once more this day, besides hundreds of times more, from other ministers, who have occasionally occupied this pulpit, during my connection with you. And all these men have passed, or are passing away; and the memory of these thousands of sermons, which have contributed to shape your character and destinies for eternity, rises up, and appeals to you. What impression have they left upon your souls, and what record borne to heaven concerning you? To the children of some of you, these hands have administered the seal of the covenant, in the waters of baptism; on some of you, my beloved youth, I have sprinkled those holy waters which signified your relation to the covenant, and your dedication to the Lord. Many of you have seen in this sanctuary, and in that which formerly stood here, the manifest tokens of the descent of the spirit of God. Some of you have rejoiced in souls renewed, and sins forgiven. Some of you have felt the agonies of conviction of sin, but in so far as man can judge, you did not enter into terms of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, when his spirit strove with you. Some

have been thoughtful,—perhaps are thoughtful now. And some utterly despised the word and ordinances of the Lord's house; and for some, the table of the Lord has been spread scores of times in vain, for you have turned away from the symbols of the living bread, and refused the memorials of the atoning blood. Some have sinned against light and knowledge. Some have hardened themselves against God, and how have they prospered who are still utterly unmoved, in rebelling, and resisting the Holy Ghost!

And now let me appeal to *you personally:* Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? How stands it between your soul and God? Ye *Christians*, are you growing in grace, letting your light shine, and ripening for heaven? *Ye tempted and afflicted ones*, are the consolations of God small with you, and what good have you extracted from your sorrows? Ye, who have been *awakened*, are ye still anxious for your salvation, or, do ye now believe? Ye *careless ones* and despisers of the gospel, how long will ye behold, and wonder and perish in your unbelief against the word of God, which we have declared unto you? Ye *parents*, how have you honored and observed the promise which is to you, and your children, by training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Ye *baptised persons*,—baptised men and women, who have hitherto trifled with your birth-right, and defrauded your children of theirs,—and ye young persons and children, who have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what use have you made, and what use are you making of the privilege, and of the promise of God, and of the covenant of adoption, and of your own solemn obligations therein, and what requital are you making to that blessed Saviour, who authorised your introduction to the seal of naturalization in his church, by commanding, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?" Are ye yet in your sins? And all ye, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, what are ye doing, and what have you done with the providences, and mercies, and trials, and means of grace, which God has employed with you, and in which you have been connected with the ministry of God's servants, the prophets who have passed, and are passing rapidly with you to that judgment-seat, where all of us must soon give account?

Let *me* appeal: And now, how many scenes rise up, in which you and I have mingled together: I have united some of you in marriage, blessed the nuptial bond, and prayed, when I exhorted you then, that your houses might be Bethels, that the fire of devotion might be kindled by your hands on the domestic altar and burn in your hearts, and that you and your partners, and your children, might become heirs together of the grace of life: Have you performed your engagements, and

honored your mercies? Have you set up the domestic altar, and, as sons and daughters have been born unto you, sought diligently, and prayerfully, to train them up in the way they should go? and have you given yourselves unto the Lord, and dedicated your offspring unto God, before His altars, and in the courts of the Lord's house? Again, I have sat at your bed-side, when you were sick, and afraid to die; and I saw your anguish, and counselled you then, and I prayed for you, and prayed with you, and I heard your vows and hopes; and again, you recovered: But where are your vows to-day and how have they been kept? Again, I have followed not a few from among you to the grave, and how many affecting scenes in the house of mourning, rise now before my memory, and yours. Sometimes the aged father or mother in Israel, who, like a shock of corn fully ripe, died in peace, and entered upon the joy of the Lord. And sometimes, the youthful Christian, gathered with the early dead, but not too soon for him, nor too soon for the heaven for which grace had made him meet to be a partaker. And these were your dead, and mine, mine also sleep in your burial-places side by side with yours. Have you, their children, their brothers, sisters, or friends, been profited by their death, so that you have become followers of them who, through grace and patience, have inherited the promises? And sometimes, it was the aged sinner, "laden with guilt and heavy woes;" and sometimes, the young sinner, cut off in his guilty career, and from his deceitful hopes and plans: And you have seen it, too; and have you trembled, and turned unto God, when He spared you, while he was striking them down and destroying them at your very side, and, amid this scene which was meant for mercy to you, warned you by the hopeless end of them who "died and made no sign?" And sometimes, it was the father or mother, in the very prime of life, prostrated by insidious disease, and leaving the widowed partner like a lonely partridge, to mourn in solitude, and the hapless babes to bewail their lot of orphanage. And again, the sweet and blooming infant, and the budding youth of girlhood, and the young man in his pride of strength,—just fixed his footsteps on the threshold of manly life,—have offered a shining mark and inviting target for the shaft of the insatiated archer,—and parents have lamented in the bitterness of grief, and, in their anguish, burst forth in passionate exclaiming, "My child, my child! would God I had died for thee, my child!" And yet again, the wedding feast has been spread, and a tender but pleasant luxury of sweet and timid sorrow, has mingled with the joy of the bridegroom and the bride—but soon, alas! yea, sometimes ere the appointed day came round, another partner claimed the plighted hand, and the bridal couch was exchanged for the winding-sheet, and the cold, dark grave, and the felicitations of kinsmen and friends, for the em-

brace and brotherhood of corruption and the worm, that feed sweetly in their hideous, loathsome revelry, on the fair, but unresisting and helpless form, alike of delicate beauty and sinewy manhood. Whose house has not death invaded!

My friends, you have shared these scenes, and I have shared them with you. They are of the incidents in your domestic history. In these and like afflictions you have sought the presence and counsels, the consolations and prayers of your minister. And the God of all comfort hath even united us with you in tender sympathies, as partakers of like afflictions, that so we might be the better able to instruct and comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God—that our affliction and consolation might be for your consolation and salvation, through the close and enduring bonds of communion in sorrow and communion in joy. And now, I ask you, how you have borne these sorrows, and read these affecting lessons of Providence, and gained, as wisdom and grace can gain,—extracting spiritual life and health, even from the gloom of the house of mourning, and from the fields and ravages of death!

I seek not in waking up these tender recollections, to wound stricken hearts afresh, nor to provoke a mere momentary sigh, nor barely to unseal as for this little moment, the fountain of your tears. And yet, why should not both you and I weep, unmindful of fastidious propriety, and indulging the luxury of grief and the salutary sorrow sanctioned by our great high priest, whose heart of tenderness overflowed, when standing beside the tomb of his friend Lazarus, and surrounded by the tearful Martha and Mary, and the sympathising friends of that lovely, bereaved family of Bethany, even "Jesus wept."

But still, we would use these scenes to mark the flight of time, and to suggest inquiries as to what we have laid to heart, and what has been the influence upon our spiritual condition, of all this mingled sorrow and kindness, warning and rebuke, mercies and means of grace, which we review this day? Oh! with what spirit, with what saving impression and sanctified emotion, shall our hearts dwell upon the questions,—Where are the friends of our youth? Where our loved ones? Where are the dead? Where are *we*, and whither do we tend? and what is our portion in the gospel, and our portion in eternity?

How oft have your ministers toiled in pastoral labors, waking while you slept, now trimming the midnight lamp, and now mediating on their sleepless couch, late in the watches of the night, and now bending the knee in prayers for you, while they kept these vigils of which your slumbers were unconscious, and of the meaning of which you are too unconscious even while you wake. Why do I speak thus publicly, of these private, personal exercises, and secluded studies in the word of God? It is because you are concerned in them. They are of

the cares and labors of the prophets and ministers of God, on your behalf. It is that I may appeal to you, who have the fruits of our labors, and ask you, "What fruits of your salvation shall we have in requital of our ministry among you?"

And let the solemn tones of the question which is uttered from the lips of the Lord of Hosts, ring in your ears, and be repeated in your resounding hearts, until it forces you to repentance and to peace with God; until you comprehend the fulness of that merciful solicitude with which your God is asking you, "Your fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever?"

SERMON CCCCLXIX.

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SYMPATHY WITH CHRIST.

"But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, we are able.

"And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but, to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."—MATTHEW XX: 22, 23.

THE two disciples of our Lord, who applied to have special posts of honor assigned to them in his kingdom, were ignorant of what was involved in their request. Such honor could be shared, only, by their having, in another respect, been common sharers with their Lord. They must drink of his cup, and be baptized with his baptism. James and John desired to sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left; they are given to understand that in order to be joint heirs with Christ in His glory, they must be ready to suffer with him; for, if so be that we suffer with him, we shall be also glorified together.

SYMPATHY WITH CHRIST, OR FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM, IN HIS HUMILIATION, IS THE BELIEVER'S TRUE GLORY. To this subject your attention is now invited.

Mere enjoyment, it is evident, is, with multitudes, the great end to be sought in becoming Christians. At one period of our Lord's public ministry he was followed by a large number who professed to be his disciples, but who, when he told them what was the nature of true religion, went back and walked no more with him; which led him to propose to the Twelve that affecting inquiry, "Will ye, also, go away?" And, on several oc-

casions, the Saviour seems to have labored to make manifest to some who proposed to follow him, that they were influenced by earthly motives. It is not impossible, my brethren, that some even in our times should fall into views equally at variance with the truth. That religion imparts the only true happiness, even in this world, is what I would at all times maintain. But it is a great error to suppose that religion is designed to communicate that kind of happiness which men, in their unrenewed and carnal state, do love; and the reason why the world suppose that piety is fatal to enjoyment, and is fitted only to sadden the heart, is their very mistaken views of what happiness consists in. The world that lieth in wickedness, is wholly at fault on the great question which respects the nature of true happiness. And hence the difficulty of convincing men that it is religion, and religion alone, which can meet the great wants of human nature, and speak peace to their troubled spirits. They are looking for happiness in sensual gratification, in worldly splendor and affluence; and it is hard to convince them that the only true enjoyment, and that which is alone worth seeking, hath its place in the mind, and may be possessed, in its full measure, when all external signs of prosperity are wanting.

It would be matter of sincere rejoicing if, even among men professing godliness, there were no evidence of the prevalence of a similar mistake. True prosperity in religion (how difficult it has been for the church to learn the lesson!) consists not in outward estate. Christ declared that his kingdom is not of this world. There may be the highest prosperity, the noblest advancement, in the absence of all those outward marks which men are wont to regard as the natural signs of a happy and prosperous state. The people of God may more deeply imbibe the Spirit of Christ—the effusion of the Holy Spirit may be granted, and it often has been, when the state of the Church was externally calamitous. It may be pleasing to the imagination to depict to ourselves, or to have depicted, a state of repose, and of external tranquility to the Church, in which we are to have a share; but we should covet far more earnestly, as the best of all heavenly gifts, the effusion of the Holy Spirit, working that faith in us by which we have a vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this upon which depend the life and power of godliness; which promotes the mortification of sensual lusts, and eminent self-denial; and which beautifies, energizes, and sanctifies the Church of God.

Let us suppose Christianity to be free from all opposition, and that the Church is in a state of the highest worldly prosperity, by being in favor with princes and potentates of the earth. Let us suppose that the ministers of religion are raised to the highest places of honor, and are treated with deference by all classes of men—that churches and cathedrals, that libra-

ries and universities, devoted to the defence of Christianity, fill the land, and that the highest rulers are proud to be known as the defenders of the faith. Now, would all this honor, this power, this array, constitute a truly prosperous state of the Church—such a state as implies the prevalence of vital piety, humility, zeal for the honor of religion and the spread of the Gospel? What is mere nominal Christianity, with all its universities, cathedrals, bishoprics, and a powerful sovereign at the head of the whole, without the spirit of Christ in those who profess to be his followers? "Golden chalices," as has been said, "and wooden priests; the Church would be a glorious sepulchre, splendid without, but full of rottenness and corruption within. Religion would soon languish away, and come to nothing; the sun of prosperity would exhale the life, and spirit, and vigor of it."*

Nominal Christianity, or the Church thus in favor with princes and statesmen, and the world, might subserve to promote refinement of manners, science, and art, and to improve the political condition of a people by wholesome laws and humane institutions; and it might supplant atheism in men's minds, by the strength of reason, or of education; but it could not, without the Spirit of God, make the hearts of men better. If true religion consists in the fear of God, or in following the example of Christ in purity, spirituality, self-denial, meekness, and a disposition to do good to all men, how easy it is to perceive that all the external decorations and appendages of an ecclesiastical establishment may exist, without the life and power of godliness. And how easy it is to perceive that if the Church were frowned away from king's palaces, as aforetime,—driven out from the proud nations of the earth, and compelled to take refuge in the fastnesses of Alpine mountains, or in secluded valleys, and numbering among its disciples only the powerless of the earth, and those willing to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, that spiritual Christianity, under this calamitous state, might flourish, in a remarkable degree, like the palm tree, of which it has been said that the greater the weight hung upon its branches, the more it grows and flourishes. But I will not here anticipate another branch of the subject, but pass to inquire,

Secondly; In what sense the disciples of Christ can be said to share in the cup and baptism of their Lord. It is obvious that the expiatory sufferings of Christ cannot be meant. The atonement of Christ was finished when He arose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of power. It needs nothing to render it complete. His sufferings were wholly incommunicable; He was alone in them; not even angels, of whom legions stood

* John Howe.

ready to hasten to His succor, were permitted to share any part of his burden.

"As they have persecuted me," Christ said to his disciples, "they will also persecute you." He thus distinctly forewarned them that they would have to meet the same hatred and persecution of the world, which He had encountered. And these words were fulfilled. Some of the apostles were imprisoned; some were slain with the sword; some were crucified with the head downward, and some after the manner of their Lord. And whilst these sufferings constituted no part of the atonement, they were encountered in the same cause, from the same enemies, and in a similar spirit of constancy and love. Of the cup which He drank, they partook, though not as he did; and with his baptism they were baptized, but it was his strength which upheld, and his grace which preserved them.—Christ is persecuted and suffers in his members. He said to Saul of Tarsus, when he met him on his way to Damascus, "Why persecutest thou me?" In this sense the sufferings of true believers, who are the mystical body of Christ, are his sufferings. When they are imprisoned, he is the captive; when they are slain with the sword, he receives the blow; when they are bound to the stake, he is the martyr.

Fellowship with Christ, in his humiliation, is a common topic with the inspired apostles. As the sufferings of Christ abounded in them, they confidently expected that their consolation, by Christ, would also abound. It was even an object of fervent desire with them, to know the fellowship of his sufferings, and to be made conformable unto his death. They rejoiced in their sufferings, and, to fill up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the Church. They exhorted Christians not to think it strange concerning the fiery trial which was to try them as though some strange thing happened to them, but to rejoice inasmuch as they were partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory should be revealed they might be glad with exceeding joy. The atoning sufferings of Christ are accounted to his people for righteousness; their participation in them, accordingly, is not in the endurance of them, but solely in their blessed fruits. But, at the same time, the sufferings of martyrs and confessors, and of persecuted and afflicted Christians in general, are conducive to the complete salvation of the Church, which is the body of Christ. He is the head, and we are the members; and we bear his sufferings, by our mystical union with him, by his Spirit.

It is not strange nor unaccountable that believers should suffer with their Lord in the same manner, and for the same cause. The imitation of Christ, by his people, in the strictness of their lives, and the purity of their conversation, is just as much adapted now to occasion the hatred of an unbelieving world, in proportion to their success, being like their great pattern,

as at any former period. "Blessed are ye when all men shall persecute you;" and our Saviour added, "for so persecuted they the prophets;" and we may say, "so have they persecuted the apostles, the early witnesses for the truth; and so persecuted they the Reformers." Christ sent forth his disciples as sheep among wolves; and they are still a little flock, who, through much tribulation, must enter into his kingdom. In the early days of Christianity, Christians, by their very harmlessness and innocence, became the victims of malice and persecution. If a pestilence or famine laid waste the Roman empire, it was attributed to their impiety. If an insane emperor for a night's amusement set fire to the city of Rome, they were accused of perpetrating the enormous crime. The vicious and abandoned population of ancient Rome, reproved by the holiness of christians, cried out against them, "Away with these men from the face of the earth."

An ungodly world hates the light; the more, therefore, the people of God reflect the light of divine holiness, the more they will be exposed to its opposition and hostility. It is in this sense that the Son of Man declares that he came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword. As one effect of the moral law is to awaken the hatred of the unrenewed heart, insomuch that the apostle could say, "I had not known sin but by the law," so the gospel, pure and holy as it is, and designed to promote the salvation of men, becomes sometimes the occasion, or the exciting cause, of odious crimes among men. The world is offended by the holy, self-denying life of the christian. "The exact, holy walking of a Christian," says Leighton, "really condemns the world about him; shows the disorder and foulness of their profane ways, and the life of religion set by the side of dead formality, discovers it to be a carcase and lifeless appearance; and for this, neither grossly wicked, civil, nor formal persons can well digest it. There is in the life of a Christian, a convincing light that shows the deformity of the works of darkness." It is not a peculiarity of those alone who are abandoned in sin to be offended with the strict and holy lives of the righteous. The outwardly moral and self-righteous feel condemned, and, in times of persecution, none have been found more forward than they.

It is, indeed, true, my brethren, that God, in his merciful providence, exempts us from persecution, but he has not exempted us from seeking to have fellowship with his dear Son, in his humiliation, self-denial, readiness to toil and suffer for the good of mankind. It is but a partial view of what is meant by bearing the cross, to understand simply the pains of martyrdom, or a willingness on the part of Christians to endure those pains rather than to deny the faith of Christ. The cross is to be borne daily. Never should the ministers and professed followers of Christ cease to have fellowship with him, as a Saviour

whom the world knows and received not, who is despised and rejected of men. In a season of external repose to the Church, such fellowship, it is evident, is more difficult to be maintained than when Christians are exposed to the violent assaults of inexorable foes. By the direct tendency of persecutions, they become crucified in spirit to the world, and the world is crucified to them.

The greatest danger I apprehend to religion, at the present time, is, that the disciples and ministers of Christ should have more fellowship with the world than with him whom they profess to follow and to serve. It is the spirit of this world, which in all ages, has tended to corrupt the Church. It was this, manifested in a love of worldly power and display, in splendid decorations, and an imposing ritual, fascinating the senses of men, that the great apostacy of the Church, was brought about. When Christianity had become secularised, it was as much in favor with ungodly princes, and the lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God, as any pagan system ever had been. Had Nero and Domitian lived at a later period, instead of being persecutors, they, too, would have borne the title of "defenders of the faith." And in every communion in which that cardinal principle, that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, is lost sight of, there the man of sin is found. If we have regarded the revival of ritualism as a dark and unpromising feature of the times, and if we would guard against the tendency to this evil, it becomes an important duty to hold up, in the clearest light, the distinguishing features of the religion of Christ, and to show that there is, and can be, no concord between light and darkness, or Christ and Belial. The preaching of the cross must rebuke worldliness and pride; nor is that worthy the name of Christian preaching under which these evils are fostered and grow.

What though the heirs of eternal glory should escape persecution? they must, nevertheless, lead humble and self-denying lives. They must often tread the thorny road of sacrifice, of hardship, of danger. They must, if they would follow Christ. He came not to this world to travel in a flowery path, or recline in bowers of repose. He came to be disowned and rejected, to be a stranger to his own world, without a place to lay his head; to endure the contradiction of sinners, to toil, and pray, and weep over a perishing world, and at length to bear his own cross, until he fainted beneath the burden, on his way to an ignominious execution. And it is enough for the disciple to be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. Therefore the disciple should regard it as no strange or unaccountable event if he meet sore trials that are grevious to be borne. He should not expect undisturbed repose, nor to "be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease." He should be looking for days of darkness and storm; not indeed to afflict himself with imagina-

ry fears, but so to acquaint his thoughts with sufferings and disappointments, that he may not be shaken from his steadfastness when they have certainly arrived. Nothing is to be gained to religion by representing that nothing is to be lost or surrendered by embracing it, which the unsanctified heart loves. We may paint it with all the coloring that can please the sense, and persuade how easy it is to walk the road to heaven; but our flowers of rhetoric will not scatter carnal sweets in the path of holiness; it will still remain a "straight and thorny road." Men must give up something in order to become the disciples of Christ; they must surrender much. They must give up the love of sin, they must renounce the vanities of the world, they must give up self. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." It is in spiritual conflicts, in sacrifices, and self-denying labors for the good of others, and agonising supplications, that the disciples and ministers of Christ must drink of the same cup, and be baptized with the same baptism, as their Lord.

Thirdly; fellowship with Christ, as a despised and suffering Saviour, is precisely what the people of God need to prepare them to share in the triumphs and the glory of the kingdom of Christ.

This will be evident, in the first place, if we consider that the morfification of lust and pride in a world of trial, deepens the work of grace in the hearts of true believers, and prevents the prevalence of spurious piety. It will deepen the work of grace in the hearts of true believers, by detaching their affections more entirely from the world, and awakening within them more fervent aspirations after heavenly peace and blessedness. Such is the power of in-dwelling sin, even in true believers, that the world needs to be made to them a suffering and perilous abode, that they may never be unmindful that they are strangers and pilgrims, and have here no continuing city, and no abiding place. Did the world extend to the religion of Christ a bland and gracious reception, and were the path of Christians made smooth and pleasant through it, how great would be the danger of their becoming conformed to it, and how few, it is to be feared, would give evidence of being crucified and dead to it!

The faith of God's people is tried and strengthened when they are called to endure the shame of the cross. They can then discern whether they truly possess faith. They have an opportunity of perceiving whether they can trust God, when every earthly prospect is beclouded, and every human helper fails. They are able better to understand the true nature of faith—that it is a simple, childlike, unreserved trust in God, although we may not be able to see in what manner, or by what instruments and means. He will extricate us from our

perplexities. The value of faith is also discovered in that support, and fortitude, and joy, which it imparts, however distressing the present may be, or dark the future. And how delightfully are the truth and sweetness of the promises confirmed to the Christian's heart, in his sacrifices and sufferings for Christ! He learns that God is faithful and true, and will never be unmindful of his covenant. And oh! how this proof of the divine faithfulness—these endearing tokens of the Divine love, tend to bind and knit the soul to him!

Sufferings for Christ's sake, moreover, will foster the spirit of self-denial, and the endurance of hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. It is danger and occasions which demand a spirit of self-sacrifice, in worldly matters, which have led to the performance of those noble actions which excite admiration among men. And it is no less true, in spiritual things, that the most heroic and self-denying Christians have been formed under similar influences. As we do not expect the development of the sterner and more sublime attributes of manhood, where all is softness and effeminate luxury, so we are not to expect the highest attainments in piety, and the most faultless specimens of Christian character, when Christians are entire strangers to the offence of the cross, and flow on in the world upon a smooth and unruffled current.

Again; there is no little danger, in a time of peace and quiet, when the offence of the cross, in a great measure ceases, lest a spurious piety should extensively prevail. By the figure of the seed, falling upon stony places, which very soon springs up because it has no depth of soil, but as quickly withers away when the sun is up, the Saviour teaches us to expect that some will appear joyfully to embrace the gospel in a season of prosperity, who will not endure when adversity comes—who will not bear the cross after Christ, through evil report as well as good report. Men who profess Christianity, without counting the cost, when persecution ariseth, because of the word, or when sacrifices are demanded, will give proof that it is not deeply rooted in their hearts. When religion ceases to be an easy thing, and reproach must be endured, and self-denial practised, not having the root of matter in them, they cease to cast in their lot with the people of God, and return to the weak and beggarly elements of the world. The contending against the corruptions of the flesh, the love of carnal ease, and the fashions of an ensnaring world, was not taken into account when they began to build, and therefore they are not able to finish. And is not the cause of true Christianity promoted by a process which purges away the dross, and, at the same time, still further refines the gold? Is it strengthened by the increase of those who will not stand by the test of persecution, or who decline a humble, prayerful walk with God, or those pious labors and sacrifices imposed by the light of his

providence? whose attachment to Christ is graduated by the degree of favor with which he is regarded by men? who deem it pleasant to be Christians only when it is fair weather, and the voice of duty summons them not to the field of conflict, but flee when the season of toil and trial arrives? O! let us never forget that it is by fellowship with Christ, as a crucified and despised Saviour, that the Christian Church is to be strong in the Lord, and the power of his might, in the great undertaking of bringing this lost world back to God. If the Church has been weak, and her efforts to diffuse the gospel have, to a considerable extent, proved abortive, it is because she has failed to glory in the cross, and to have sympathy with her Head in his humiliation and sacrifices for the salvation of the world.

"Oh, who shall sing the joyful song at last?
Oh, who shall raise in heaven the conqueror's strain?
O'er foes subdued and inward vices slain,
And seasons of temptation safely passed?
'Tis he who counts all other things but dross,
When put into the scale with God's dear Son;
Who willingly the Christian race doth run,
And fights, and toils, and conquers in the cross.
The cross imparts perennial peace within;
The cross resists and scatters outward foes;
'Tis by the cross the saints their victories win,
And rise to glory as their Saviour rose.
Then heed not earthly shame, nor earthly loss,
But count it all for good, if thou may'st bear the cross." *

The cross ever has been, and must continne to be, the emblem of true Christianity in the world; not a mere painted and gilded ornament, or an object of religious veneration, but the spiritual badge of the soldier of the cross, who is waging war with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The two disciples, James and John, sought for posts of distinction in the kingdom of Christ; they should have known that in order to share in such glory, they must drink the cup he drank, and be baptized with the baptism he was baptized with. Throughout the Scriptures, suffering with or for Christ, is made to issue in a participation of his glory. Such suffering promotes a sincere, humble and self-denying piety, and therefore prepares the people of God to attempt and accomplish much for Zion. Their labors are crowned with glorious success; and the share they have in the earthly triumphs of Zion, falls not a whit short of the portion they had in her sadness and travail. "Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers in Christ's sufferings; that when his glory is revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy." "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

A glorious work is to be accomplished in this world. Jesus is to take the kingdom to himself. And that his people may be made ready to be co-heirs of the glory, he will make them co-workers in reclaiming a lost world to himself. But who shall

* Prof. Upham's Religious Sonnets.

follow in his conquering train? If the Captain of Salvation was made perfect through sufferings, must not those whom he leads to conquest and to glory be baptized with the same baptism and drink of the same cup? must they not follow him in humility, in self-denial, and unwearied labors for the good of men? And what if actually called to tread the wine-press of suffering! to bare their backs to the smiters, and their cheek to them who pluck off the hair! to be despised and rejected! Are not the soldiers of the cross to share in the dangers of their glorious Leader? Does He say, "Follow me?" and do we expect to be led by Him, who had not where to lay His head and trode the dolorous way at Jerusalem, only into enchanted bowers, or to feasts of joy? Will that be a conquering Church, which is smiled upon, and courted by the world, and which courts and smiles upon the world in return? No, my brethren. Has not God put enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent? And this great subject must be understood before the enterprise of converting the world to Christ, is successful.

A celebrated artist, during the Reformation, published a set of prints, under the title of CHRIST'S PASSION, AND ANTICHRIST, in which he represented on one side the glory and magnificence of the Pope, and on the other, the humiliation and sufferings of the Redeemer.

What room for a striking dissimilitude between the meek simplicity of the Man of Sorrows, and the grandeur and parade of that triple tyrant, who had kings for his subjects, kingdoms for his provinces, and the revenues of empires to supply his coffers. And is there no room for such a contrast now between Zion, in her worldly estate, and the meek simplicity of her once incarnate and crucified Lord and King? Is the Church, and are her ministers, looking unto Jesus, who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame? and do they sympathize with him? do they understand that in order to rejoice in glory like him and with him, they must seek to save the lost with benevolence and earnestness like his? do they understand that they have not reached their highest privilege, and the only honor worth aspiring after, till they have come to the greatest self-denial and beneficence which can be practiced with advantage to the salvation of the world? God will accomplish the salvation of this world in a way that will stain the pride of human glory. He will humble the spirit of his people, and then teach them that he can save by many or by few. He can make the weak to be as David, and can cause one to chase a thousand, and two to put ten thousand to flight.

The work will surely be accomplished, although at what time, or in what particular manner, we can not fully know; Christ shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall have his portion with the great, and divide the spoil with the strong; and those

who partake of his sufferings, or who have fellowship with him in his humiliation, when his glory is revealed, shall be glad with exceeding joy. "Fear not, thou worm, Jacob, and ye men of Israel; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small and shalt make the hills chaff." Embarrassments may seem to multiply, and inauspicious events to rise; but cast not away your confidence, for yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.

IN CONCLUSION,

I remark that this subject pointedly rebukes ambitious views and a worldly policy in the professed followers of Christ. The two disciples who sought for places of distinction in the kingdom of Christ, knew not for what they asked. Their eye was upon a throne, regal splendor, an obsequious retinue, the homage of admiring thousands. O deluded disciples! ye did not know that the only earthly crown of your Master was to be a wreath of thorns—His only royal robe some worn-out, gorgeous vestment of a Herod—His only sceptre a poor brittle reed! Ye did not know that He was to be proclaimed King of the Jews, by an insulting inscription on the timber which bore up His lacerated body! Ah! ye did not know that to ask for distinction in His kingdom was to ask for a share in the cup and baptism of his sufferings!

What a sore evil has ecclesiastical ambition proved to the cause of Christ! The world still mourns under its influence. The midnight gloom, it is true, has been broken; but the full light of day will never shine until the spirit which actuated the two disciples in their request, has been expelled from the Church, and the disciples and ministers of Christ have fellowship with him, in respect to efforts and sacrifices to save a dying world. Away, then, with accursed ambition from the Church. Let us seek to catch the spirit of that Redeemer who toiled, and wept, and bled for man. Let the same mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; this is to have fellowship with him. Then we shall not seek or look for a mere post of honor or emolument; we shall rejoice to be found in the hardest field of labor, in the hottest of the conflict. We shall be willing to go where there are many difficulties to be overcome, many trials to be endured, many enemies to be encountered, few to sympathize with us, and but little prospect of any earthly requital.

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THE DOCTRINE OF EVANGELICAL SUBMISSION.

For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.—Romans, x. 3.

A true Christian earnestly desires the salvation of his fellow sinners; for God in Christ is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter, iii. 9.); he is particularly anxious for the salvation of those to whom he is bound by natural ties; for God, in providence, has commended them to his particular regard; and when he sees those thus dear to him, not careless of their salvation, but zealously striving after it, though by wrong methods and in a wrong direction, his sympathies must be yet more deeply interested, and his best endeavors be used to set them right.

Such was the spirit of the apostle toward the Jews. They were his fellow sinners, and, therefore, in need of the same salvation with himself. They were his countrymen, his kindred, and, therefore, dear to him above every other peeple; so, notwithstanding, that the Gospel he preached, and had demonstrated in the former part of his epistle, utterly condemned all who rejected it, he vehemently protests that his "heart's prayer and desire to God for Israel is, that they may be saved:" and this the more, because he saw, that, in their ardent attachment to the Mosaic system they were honest, though mistaken: "I bear them record (or witness) that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Then, in the text, he points out their error, the occasion of it, and their duty:

"They, being ignorant of God's righteousness (this was the *occasion* of their error), and going about to establish their own righteousness (this was the *error* itself), have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God," (which was their *duty*.)

Here are several things for us to note, though we have not time to dwell upon them:

1st. An earnest desire of salvation is in itself right, and, therefore, to be encouraged. The apostle whose "heart's prayer and desire was that Israel might be saved," is very far from blaming them for endeavoring to obtain salvation. What he desired for them, they surely might desire for themselves. Their fault lay in not seeking salvation by the right method.

2dly. Ignorance of true religion will not excuse men for the neglect of it, but, when voluntary (as was the case with the Jews), is itself guilt. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost (rather, them that *destroy themselves*), in whom the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not." (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.)

3dly. The only basis upon which we can be saved, is righteousness;—the righteousness which God requires by his holy law. In this the apostle and the Jews were agreed. Salvation must be consistent with the justice of Him, who "will by no means clear the guilty."

4thly. All hope of establishing our own righteousness is taken away, and the attempt forbidden by the Gospel of God in Christ. It was through ignorance of God's righteousness, that the Jews went about to establish their own.

And 5thly. The true method of righteousness is submission to the righteousness of God.

The aim of our discourse is, in reliance upon divine help, (which we invoke from God the Father through God the Son, by God the Holy Ghost, to whom be equal and undivided praise, Amen!) to set forth the Christian doctrine of

SUBMISSION TO GOD.

The meaning of submission is plain enough. It is a yielding of ourselves to the authority, and an acquiescence in the will of another.

If we inquire,

FIRST: TO WHOM ARE WE TO SUBMIT:

we shall be prepared to learn,

SECONDLY: IN WHAT THE SUBMISSION CONSISTS.

FIRST: TO WHOM ARE WE TO SUBMIT?

To *God*. This is our natural duty, as creatures. God, who made us and preserves us, has a supreme right to govern, direct, and dispose of us, according to his own will.

His government must be infinitely perfect, because he is infinitely perfect in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. Therefore should his own infinite excellence, our dependence upon him, responsibility at his judgment, gratitude for his benefits, and desire of our own good, lead us to obey, trust, love, and glorify him, with all our hearts, and minds, and lives. To

resist him, is to do wrong, and encounter certain misery; to submit to him, is to do right, and be certainly blessed.

But can we thus perfectly submit ourselves to God? His authority demands our entire obedience. Have we thus obeyed him? We have not, for his word declares us all to be sinners. Can we, by any obedience in the present or future, make up for the dishonor we have done to his holy law? We cannot, for our present duty requires all our powers, and could not, even if it were perfectly performed, be applied to make up for our past defects. Are we able now to serve and glorify him? Alas! our whole nature has become corrupt, blind, and dead in sin, because of our departure from him.

It is, therefore, impossible for us, in our natural state, to render a full and true submission to God. Even should we acknowledge his justice, we could not satisfy it; should we acquiesce in the holiness of his law, we could not fulfill it; nor may we, while obnoxious to his burning wrath, delight ourselves in his love. But can a sinner, so lost, blind, and corrupt, acknowledge with his heart the justice of God, and acquiesce in the will of God, when that justice only and utterly condemns him? It may be said that he ought to do so; but *can* he? Will not the same disposition, which urges him to commit sin, make him a rebel against the holy authority that punishes sin? Is it possible for him to exhibit such high conformity with the divine will that punishes, while he remains a rebel against the divine will that commands? It is clear that he is as incompetent to *submit*, as he is to obey. Either would manifest a holy spirit, and for either, he needs a new life from God.

But God, in the manifold wisdom and abounding riches of his goodness, has provided for all the exigencies of our case, and he now requires our submission, not to God immediately, but to God *in Christ*. Intent upon the only end worthy of the divine mind, God proposed for Himself a far richer glory, than He could receive either from the obedience of unfallen man, or from the punishment of man when fallen, in the salvation of sinners from the punishment and power of sin. This He accomplishes by a new scheme, which, while it in nowise contradicts the principle of His former dealings with man, admits and justifies the restoration of sinners to favor and life. He ceases not to be just, but He extends mercy; and while He pardons the lost, He renews them to holiness.

He commits the necessary work to the Eternal Son; the Eternal Son bows to the will of God, in God the Father; and His susception of the office is consummated by a divine covenant.

It was necessary, that the divine law given to man and broken by him, should be magnified and its holy sanctions of penalty and reward perfectly maintained, yet the sinner, who accepts the grace, though guilty in himself, be pardoned, and, though without right-

eousness of his own, be crowned with life, the reward of perfect obedience. So, the Son of God came at the fulness of time, into *our world*, the theatre of our responsibility; in *our nature*, the nature which had sinned, having assumed to His divine person a human soul and human body, so that He was very man as He was very God; and became voluntarily *subject* to the *law binding upon us*. Being thus found in fashion as a man, and in the form of a servant, He honored the law by an obedience infinite as to its merit, because of the divinity that dwelt in Him; and completed the work of righteousness, by voluntarily submitting Himself on the cross to that penalty of death, which His people must have suffered, had He not died for them; the shedding of his blood, because it was the blood which the Eternal Son of God had made His own, being an infinitely richer satisfaction to the divine vengeance against sin, than the eternal sufferings of a world of transgressors.

It is necessary, that the sinner, in order to his enjoyment of the divine favor, and the blessedness which flows from it, should be renewed into the holy disposition he has lost by sin, and receive strength to obey the will of God with his whole heart. So the Eternal Son, now the IMMANUEL, God incarnate, having finished His work of righteousness which justifies the pardon of the sinner that believes in His name, ascends up on high, and, according to the covenant He had on his part fulfilled, asks and receives the Holy Spirit, by whose energies He draws the sinner to Himself, enlightens his understanding, converts his heart and strengthens him with divine grace for a new life, which is carried on gradually, but surely, unto a perfect holiness in the consummation of heaven.

It is necessary that, when the Eternal Son, the Mediator between God and man, shall have accomplished the full salvation of all who believe from the guilt and the power of sin, He should descend again to make his final vindication of the justice of God in the judgment and punishment of all sinful men, who reject the salvation which he graciously offers them by his Word and Spirit.

This is the dispensation of God in Christ; the dispensation under which we are required to submit ourselves to God. All our transactions with God must now be through Christ. To approach God, except through the Mediator, is sin, rebellion, and defiance.

SECONDLY: IN WHAT DOES TRUE SUBMISSION CONSIST?

I. In seeking the salvation of our souls.

God in making us moral creatures, has committed our well-being to our own care, subject always to his righteous providence. He delights in the happiness of men. He created man happy. He has said, and confirmed it by an oath, that He has "no pleasure in the death even of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." But, since we are sinners, and there can be no happiness for us, while we remain in our sins and under condemnation, it is our duty to seek our lost well-being in that salvation

which delivers from the power of sin and the wrath of God against the sinner, because, in thus seeking the salvation of our souls, we return toward that duty which we abandoned, when we plunged our souls in sin and ruin.

Does any one say here, that we should seek salvation only for the glory of God, and not with any reference to our own well-being? We answer: The desire of salvation (which involves our well-being) is itself a duty; and how we can desire our highest well-being, for the glory of God, and yet not desire the well-being itself, no wit of man can distinguish. Certainly, the Bible does not even point at such a transcendental nicety. On the contrary, its question is: "Why will ye die?" and the controversy of our Saviour with us, is: "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life." After God had said: "In the day thou eatest thereof (the forbidden tree) thou shalt surely die," man sinned, not only in eating, but *in throwing away his life.* When our Saviour says: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" He surely teaches that a neglect of our eternal being is itself a crime. Therefore, now that we have an opportunity of eternal life, it is our duty to seek the everlasting welfare of our souls; and they, who pronounced such seeking sin, pervert the clear word of God, and, like cruel wolves, worry the tender lambs of Christ's flock. When did the Good Shepherd ever so speak to any soul that cried: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on me!"

The salvation of sinners is the great glory which God proposes to himself in Christ. How much He delights to save sinners, is seen in the infinite provision He has made for it by the gift, humiliation, obedience, and death of his Son, and the mission of his Holy Spirit through Christ. When, therefore, we submit ourselves to God in Christ, the salvation of sinners should be the great aim of our hearts; and, as our own souls are first within our reach, and we can use no proper means to save others until we are Christians ourselves, so the salvation of *our* own souls should be our first purpose. We, in so doing, consent to God, and work with God. Thus says the Apostle: "Work out (and working out includes beginning to work) *your own salvation* with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his *own good pleasure.*" The salvation of our souls is God's own good pleasure, and, therefore, our great duty is to seek it.

Besides, we are insufficient for anything of ourselves. "Without me, ye can do nothing," says the Master. Until we receive the grace of God, which is only through Christ, we remain "dead in sin," "without strength;" but when we receive grace from Christ so as to strengthen us for any duty, our *salvation is begun.* For it is *His* work to "save us *from* our sins," and "to *give repentance* with the remission of sins." It is, therefore, our duty to seek salvation, that we may be qualified for our duty to our own souls and to others. They, who suppose that they submitted to

God, in any proper sense, before they trusted in Christ, manifestly, and, except they repent, fatally err; for they claim to have accomplished for themselves, without Christ, the very work, which Christ came to accomplish in them, the subjection of their hearts to God.

It were, moreover, gross impiety to think, that now, since God has appointed Christ to reign for Him, we can submit to God except by faith in "that MAN whom He hath ordained." The sum of the Gospel is this: God has provided in Christ, and only in Christ, all that is necessary for our salvation, a new heart, a right spirit, pardon, strength, sanctification, complete redemption; and what he requires of us is, to believe in Christ, or accept Christ as our *Saviour*, for then, and then only, shall we find *in Him*, a new heart, a right spirit, pardon, strength, sanctification, and complete redemption. Until we believe in Christ *as our Saviour*, we can have nothing but guilt and do nothing but sin.

2. Submission to God in Christ implies, An adoring acquiescence in the plan of salvation.

This is what the apostle means by "submitting unto *the righteousness of God*," for he adds immediately, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" that is: The righteousness of Christ is the sole and sufficient ground of the believer's justification. Now from what we have seen of the plan of salvation in Christ, acquiescence in it requires:

(*a*) *A conviction of our utter sinfulness in the sight of God*, which rendered such a salvation necessary. Until we are sensible of our sins, we can have no part in the Saviour of sinners, who came to seek and to save the lost. There is, indeed, no genuine conviction of sin except from Christ. The law condemns, but the cross convinces. It is, then, from the sufferings of Christ, the surety of sinners, that we learn from God how great an evil sin is in His sight, and how great that sin is which is committed against One so good, so holy, and so merciful.

> "Law and terrors do but harden,
> When they operate alone;
> But a sense of blood-bought pardon,
> That can melt the heart of stone."

How then can we truly repent until we look to Christ. "If I be lifted up from the earth," saith the Saviour, "I will draw all men unto me."

(*b*) *An acknowledgment of the justice of God in our condemnation to eternal death*, from which Christ died to redeem us. God has declared His condemnation of us, and showed us that it was no arbitrary act, by providing so great a ransom in the substituted sufferings of His Son. Except, therefore, we believe our condemnation to be justly deserved, nay, that but for Christ, we must forever have lain under the wrath of God, we cannot avail ourselves of the salvation of Christ, nor submit ourselves to the righteous-

ness of God. Christ will be precious to us, just as we see ourselves to be guilty, and avail ourselves of his proffered salvation. Yet this does not make it necessary that we should be willing to perish. It is not God's will that we should perish; on the contrary, He has opened for us a way of escape; and, therefore, we should not be willing to remain under His condemnation, but should escape by the way He has opened. Indeed, the very thought is horrible, for condemnation involves not only suffering from the loss of God's favor, but extreme depravity from the absence of God's restraining and converting grace. Who that knows any thing of the excellence of God, could consent to be a damned spirit, cursing and blaspheming forever with cursing and blaspheming fiends? An acknowledgment of the justice of God in our condemnation, is our duty; but, since Christ has come (and except from Christ we could never have derived strength for such an acknowledgment), a willingness to remain under condemnation, is, turn the matter as you will, a willingness to remain the enemy of God forever. It is folly to say, that such a spirit could praise God even in torments. God never sends those who praise Him into torments. There is nothing but blaspheming in hell. Heaven is the only place for a praising spirit, after it has left the body. If you revolt from the consequences of the condemnation, you can not be willing to remain condemned. Where in that book, which declares, that "God is not willing that any should perish," can you find such a dreadful requirement made of a poor trembling sinner who loves God's glory?

(c.) *A belief of the full sufficiency and the sufficiency alone, of Christ's righteousness for the justification of the sinner.* It is sufficient because God has appointed and accepted it; and because God in Christ wrought it out and declared: "It is finished." It is the only sufficiency, because, "if righteousness could have come by the law," or in any other way, "Christ is dead in vain;" and because "God has set forth the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." What God has wrought out and declared sufficient; what God has appointed and accepted as sufficient, it were gross impiety to doubt, or to think of improving. Submission to God, therefore, requires a belief in his readiness to save. True submission is submission to God as he manifests himself; not to one attribute, but to all; to his mercy as well as his justice; his justice in saving by Christ, as well as his justice in condemning out of Christ. Submission to God without hope, is sin, because it is a denial of his righteousness in Christ. We must submit to His *salvation* by Christ, or we remain unsubmissive.

(d.) *A sense of our own inability and dependence upon the Holy*

Ghost for strength to work out our salvation. The positive assertions of the Scripture on this point, make it sufficiently clear; but the promise of the Holy Spirit "to work in us both to will and to do of God's good pleasure," makes it sin for us to attempt anything in our own strength. Yet this does not justify us in delaying, nor should it discourage us from attempting, the divine life; because the moment we attempt it, looking to God for help, the Spirit assists us; and we have no promise of his assistance, until we put forth our own endeavors. The man with the withered arm had no strength in it, but when he attempted to stretch it out in obedience to Christ, he received strength from Christ. It was not his own strength but Christ's, yet *he used* it. If we would have grace, we must exercise it. Submission to God without hope, because of our own inability to serve him, is sin; because, though convinced of our own weakness, we should attempt his service in a reliance upon the assistance of the Holy Ghost. If that were denied us, we should despair; but, since it is promised, our duty is to trust, and hope, and venture forward.

(*e.*) *Acceptance of salvation through the righteousness of God in Christ and by the grace of the Holy Ghost.* We put this last, not because it is least, or because any thing should go before it, but as the sum of the whole truth. It has run through all we have said. Under the first covenant the command with the promise was "This do and thou shalt live." Under the Gospel the command with the promise is "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Belief in Christ sums up the evangelical duty, because all duty is now included by it, and consequent upon it. For to believe in Christ is, as we have seen, to acknowledge ourselves sinners, and justly condemned; to acknowledge ourselves corrupt and dead in sin; to desire salvation, not only from the punishment of sin, but also, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, from the power of sin; to see, with adoring gratitude, the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, and of the Spirit's grace to save all who come unto God: and, therefore, acceptance of Christ as our Saviour, is submission to the will of God, in Christ. He commands us to believe, as plainly as when he commands to have no other gods before him. To *delay* this acceptance for a single moment; to suppose that we must or can do any thing right before we accept it, is to reject the grace of God. We must, it is true, not think of being saved in our sins. There is no such salvation. But we must accept salvation *from* sin, while we accept pardon *of* sin. If we open our hearts to a justifying Saviour we shall receive with him a sanctifying Spirit. There are those who will tell you, that you must submit to God, and, after you have thus given up your sins, Christ will manifest himself to you as your Saviour. But the word of God says nothing of the kind. Jesus never said so. The apostles never said so. There never was a soul truly converted to God by such a doctrine. It is not the gospel. The word of God

in Christ is: "Believe in Christ;" "Submit yourselves to the righteousness of God," even to Christ, who is "the end of the law for righteousness," and he will, by his Holy Spirit, enable you to give up your sins, and God will accept your heart, not in its native vileness, but washed by the blood, and covered by the righteousness of Jesus. This is not *selfishness*, though it is *self-love*, for it is such a love as a man ought to have for his soul, and it is compliance with God's method for our glorifying of his name.

INFERENCES.

1. Great care should be used, when addressing our fellow sinners, to interpose Christ as the Mediator between them and God. To exhort them "to submit to God," and not show them that they must submit to God in Christ, as their Saviour; to bid them "give up their hearts to God," and not insist that those hearts must be put, by faith, in Christ's hands, is not Christian teaching. A Jew, or Mohammedan, or Deist, could teach as well. It is "the preaching of the Cross," which is "the wisdom of God and the power of God to salvation." This is the "faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

It is vain to say, that the sinner knows the Gospel, and that, therefore, there is no need of such particularity. "The offence of the cross" is the great cause of the sinner's refusal to submit unto God. Neither can there be any Gospel, except Christ be first, Christ last, Christ throughout, Christ all and in all. Besides, there are not wanting false teachers, even in our day, who purposely keep Christ out of sight, until they have insisted upon certain things preliminary to faith in Christ. A most dangerous error! The Apostle Paul found such in the Church of Galatia, and what does he say? "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him, who first called you in the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel; which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 6, 7, 8.) Is not that another gospel, which keeps back Christ, or puts anything before faith in his precious name, as our Saviour and Deliverer?

2. All those who suppose that they have submitted unto God, without *at the same time* desiring and accepting salvation from God through Christ, are under a delusion, a most unchristian, baneful delusion; a delusion dishonorable to God and full of vanity and self-righteousness. No true peace can come from such a source. Peace is only found in submission to Christ as the Saviour.

3. Inquiring souls have the greatest encouragement to believe in Christ for their own salvation. Christ invites them to salvation,

bids them seek, ask, knock, strive for it. God waits to be gracious, for He promises in Christ, whom He hath sent, salvation to all who desire pardon and a new heart. It is your duty to seek salvation for God's glory, but you are also commanded to seek it that you may live. Only be desirous of salvation from *sin* as well as from hell, of perfect holiness as well as immortal blessedness; in a word, "submit yourselves to the righteousness of God" in "Christ, the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth," and you need not, you ought not to doubt the willingness of God to receive, nay, that He does receive you as his children, "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

4. How great is the wickedness, and how inexcusable the folly of those, who refuse to submit themselves unto God! Salvation is offered unto them. All things are made ready for their acceptance. God waits in his Gospel to be their friend. Yet they choose his wrath. They reject Christ. They break away from the arms of the Spirit. Because they love sin too well to give it up, or are too proud to be saved through Christ, they live without God in this world, to perish in the next. O, that they would think of the mercy they despise, the love they reject, the God they provoke, the soul they ruin, and the wrath they must endure!

SERMON CCCCLXXI.

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DIVINE PROVIDENCE PROVED AND ILLUSTRATED.

When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son.—Galatians, iv. 4.

The main design of the following discourse is to attest and illustrate a Divine Providence, by means of certain historial facts. It can be shown most conclusively, as it appears to me, that the great self-existent Being, whom we call God, intelligently, powerfully, and wisely controls all human affairs, in their accessions and revolutions, for the accomplishment of his own sublime purposes.

The text chosen for this discourse decidedly intimates the doctrine, that God sent forth his Son, at a time whose fulness, or characteristic appropriateness, had been intentionally sought and prepared, through previous ages and events. If, then, it can be shown that the advent of Christ constituted an august purpose, to

which all the great occurrences of foregoing history had been rendered pointedly subservient, the position I have assumed will be completely sustained.

To show that the advent of Christ did constitute such a purpose, and that the occurrences of history were so subservient, is the argument, in the prosecution of which you are invited now to attend me.

The plan chosen for the discussion is, in the first place, to sketch the Age of Christ, or the political, intellectual, and moral state of the world at that period; and in the second place, to prove that the assemblage of circumstances distinguishing that age, with the advent of the Redeemer at that particular crisis, was an issue directly produced by the power and wisdom of God.

I. I am, first, to sketch to you the Age of Christ, and will begin with its *political* aspect.

1. The tribe of Judah attained to an early and long-continued distinction. The Exode from Egypt, which took place fourteen hundred and eighty-seven years before the time of Christ, was followed by a solemn compact between Jehovah and his delivered people, concluded and ratified at Mount Sinai, by sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood. That compact was the organization of the Theocracy, the most wonderful form of government ever known on earth. Thenceforward this royal tribe enjoyed, through all the changes of the nation, a high pre-eminence in strength and power, and in the elevation of its rank and honors.

It gave rise, in the person of David, to a race of Hebrew kings, authorized by their covenant, for almost five hundred years; and Judah has never been surpassed, in the wealth and beauty of the country over which he ruled; in the greatness and renown of some of his monarchs; in the splendor of the holy city, his metropolis; in the wisdom and righteousness of his laws; in the excellency of his religion, or in the glory of his arms. Even when suffering the calamities of defeat and captivity—calamities which overwhelmed the ten tribes, and scattered them through the heathen nations of the East, where they were absorbed and lost, no less entirely than mysteriously—the sovereignty of this tribe, although eclipsed, was not extinguished. Upon the restoration from the captivity at Babylon, the sceptre and lawgiver were reinstated in their high places, and the administration of justice was again effected according to their national code; and for a long time afterwards their political constitution was held firmly in its seat.

In the meanwhile, another power had risen upon the world, the Roman—having been founded by Romulus, in Italy, seven hundred and thirty years after the Exode; and stretching out its grasp, from its once narrow domain, it seized on all crowns and dominions, to array them around itself, like the stately columns of its majestic temples, to support its own stupendous fabric. And even Judah came at length to bow down before this mighty conqueror.

About fifty-nine years before the birth of our Lord, the victorious Pompey effected the reduction of Syria, the lingering remains of the Grecian monarchy, founded by Philip of Macedon, and established by Alexander, upon the ruins of the Persian empire. And by depriving Antiochus Asiaticus, the last of the Seleucidæ, of his crown and rights, he ended the Greek power in Asia, and degraded that Government to the rank of a Roman province.

At that period, no fewer than twelve kings made their court to this distinguished general, suing for various interests, or protection, through the Roman arms. Among them, Aristobulus, monarch of the Jews, came, with a present of a magnificent curiosity of wrought gold, and solicited his aid, to secure him on the throne, which his usurpation withheld from his elder brother, Hyrcanus.

This event, from the peculiar direction given to it by the guilty suppliant himself, led Pompey to Jerusalem, not as a friend and ally, but as an enemy and a conqueror. He possessed himself of the city, and, after a siege of three months, took the temple, which the followers of the usurper had made their citadel. On the anniversary of the capture of Jerusalem by the armies of Chaldea, ages before, the Roman eagles perched in triumph on the throne of David, once more fallen. The deposed Hyrcanus was restored to the rank of a prince; but he was forbidden to wear a diadem, or to extend the borders of his country beyond their ancient limits. The defeated Aristobulus was carried in chains to Rome, to grace, among a crowd of other noble and royal captives, the triumphal honors decreed to their victor. Judea thus became dependant on a foreign power.

And within a short period it was made the prize for the toil and carnage of the field of battle, when, at length, Herod the Great, a Jewish proselyte, but an Idumean by birth, closed a three-years' war, by entering Jerusalem, wearing the plundered dignities of Judah's princes, in the thirty-third year before Christ was born.

The Roman empire continued to spread out its borders with its arms, until its capital, the city of the seven hills, became the mistress of all lands, or, as in the glowing portraiture of its own poetic genius it might well have been called, the light of nations, the peerless divinity of the earth; and the stately occupant of its throne amassed a dominion, stretching from the Atlantic ocean, on the west, to the Euphrates, on the east; from the Danube and the Rhine, upon the north, to the cataracts of the Nile, and the deserts of Africa, on the south; a dominion which comprehended the entire Mediterranean sea, and all the best part of the then known world.

When the Roman legions were the most triumphant, the Roman power the most extensively recognized, and the Emperor was dignified by the Senate with the title of "August," then it was that the seal of servitude was affixed to the name of Judah. The imperial decree that all the world should be taxed, required this,

among a multitude of other despoiled and subjugated states, to enrol their names, and to swear the oath of fealty. And this decree has come to be celebrated in all after time, by the illustrious fact that, while the measures of compliance had gathered all who were of the house and lineage of David, at their royal city of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men, was born there, amid strangely commingled circumstances of poverty and grandeur, in the four thousandth year of the world.

Subsequently to this period, and when Christ had reached his twelfth year, the dethronement of Archelaus, who, on Herod's death, had obtained Judea as a part of his inheritance, inflicted another severe blow on that declining people. He had been summoned to Rome, to answer the charges of tyranny and mal-administration; and being unable to justify himself, was sentenced to deposition from his principality, and banishment to a foreign land. Judea was then annexed to the imperial province of Syria, under the government of Publius Sulpitius Quirinus, whom St. Luke calls Cyrenius, to whom, together with Coponius, a Roman knight, who was appointed its procurator, it became subordinate. This act abolished her old constitution, thrust out her native princes, smote her independence to the dust, made the people directly tributary to the Emperor, supplanted Jewish laws with the laws of Rome, and invested the power of life and death in a Roman officer. Judea was crushed by the domination of imperial Rome.

2. The state of mind and morals was quite as peculiar as the political condition of things at this period. About the time of the Emperor Augustus, the literature of Rome had reached its highest ascendant, no less than the eagles of the empire; and on this account it has been called, with happy emphasis, the golden age. During the earlier state of comparative barbarism, when the grandeur of the commonwealth was gained and supported through a severe military discipline, and the prowess of an indomitable resolution, mind was bowed down by the oppression of ignorance, and all intellectual distinctions were effectually suppressed by the opinion that study was an unmanly labor. But intercourse with the Greeks, and especially the conquest of that refined people, had introduced a love for the cultivation of genius, for the display of talent, and for an acquaintance with the arts which tend either to improve or embellish life. Men of vast mental powers arose, who placed history and poetry, eloquence and philosophy, upon a high eminence; the learning of all parts of the world was invited to Rome, "and the delicate fruits transplanted from Greece were in their blossom, being cherished by the calmness of the season, and cultivated by the hand of an Emperor." The admired monuments afforded by the scattered fragments and more entire works which have survived the passage of time, have proclaimed to all succeeding ages, that the power and capacities of the human mind were carried well nigh to the highest pitch of secular refinement.

What then were the moral results upon the feelings and characters of men? Did these partake of that unexampled refinement?

When we have accorded to them all their appropriate distinction, in view of their intellectual greatness and their attainments in the sciences, arts, and architecture, we are thrown back upon the conclusion, that in all other respects, the more they were enlightened the more they were vitiated; the more polished they became, the deeper they sank in the abysses of corruption. The deficiencies of their mythology and the deformities of their morals, then, appear more striking in fact, and more painful in character. Their philosophers employed no treasures of learning, their orators no power of eloquence, and their priests no wisdom of precept or example, in animating the people to a virtuous conduct, in teaching the religion of a holy God, or in enforcing any duty to lessen the calamities of mankind. On the other hand their philosophy and their sacred economy abounded in contradictions, taught principles which despoiled the soul, filled the breasts of men with a cruel selfishness, and multiplied polytheism to an enormous extent. Their very doctrines repecting the rewards of virtue and the punishment of vice, after the present life, were better fitted to administer indulgence to iniquity than encouragement to rectitude.

The wisdom, and learning, and brilliancy of the golden age, bowed down in the worship of so poor a god as the personification of every rude and unholy passion, of every boisterous and malignant evil. Jupiter and Mars, Bacchus and Venus, are so many names for cruelty and oppression, intemperance and vice. Humanity sickens at the details which an examination of their mythological relations discloses; while, as to the scenes enacted before their shrines and called religious rites, St. Paul has said that for their shame a Christian could not even name them. Yet it was for such divinities those magnificent temples were constructed, which are still the wonder of men, and seem to stand as if to perpetuate the memory of the *degradation* to which they ministered. The consequence could only be to bring every imagination to evil, as with the spell of an enchanting delusion—to enslave every mind to the power of selfish interests and depraved passions, and to produce an universal corruption of manners, discovering itself in the impunity of the most flagitious crimes, and in practices of the most shameless atrocity.

Let us now turn to the Jews. The fall of their national independence had not caused an entire suppression of the forms of civil and religious institutions; the exercise of their sacred rites, particularly, being permitted. These last indeed had undergone but few essential alterations, for, notwithstanding their extreme degeneracy in morals and the perverting power of their traditions, the law of Moses yet continued to command an outward observance and respect.

They still adorned their ritual with costly appliances and innumerable victims, but it was almost uterly divorced from the solemnity of feeling and the devotional awe it once inspired. The design of its institution had been to remind the Hebrew worshipper of his multiplied obligations to the God of Heaven, to proclaim the defection and guilt of man, and to unite the hope of pardon and acceptance to him who, by the sacrifice of himself, should purge the sins of the people. But its spirituality had been absorbed in the strifes and heresies of malignant sects, in the calamities of their political oppressions, and above all in the belief that the expected Messiah would come to be a temporal prince and a magnificent leader, who would raise up and ascend their fallen throne, and by the conquests of mighty armies, avenge their wrongs upon the hatred Roman, and make their land the glory and their sceptre the supremacy of all nations.

It is charged by Josephus, their own historian, that the chief places among the people and among the priesthood, were occupied by men, who had reached them through bribery and violence, and maintained them by the most flagitious acts and abandoned immoralities. When authority was the associate of venality, when learning was coupled with dissoluteness, when the priesthood was infamous for licentiousness, when sanctity and wisdom were the co-partners of dissensions and hypocrisy, what fate could remain for the religion and morals of the people at large, but to be sunken in darkness, errors, and corruption. They were ignorant of God and divine things, and reduced their temple service to a heartless series of sacrifices and ablutions. Hence arose the fearful iniquity and endless seditions, robberies, and extortions, which armed against them the justice of God and the vengeance of man.

From this sketch of the Age of Christ, it appears that it was distinguished by three peculiarly remarkable facts.

The first was, that of the two most extraordinary kingdoms ever erected among men—the one, the Jewish, from the midst of unrivalled greatness had fallen into a declension, which no circumstances could arrest; and the other, the Roman, had risen to an eminence to which no civil grandeur remained to be added.

The second was, that the Roman people, in one respect exhibited to the world an example of the surpassing splendors in which the human mind may array its intellectual powers; and in another, of the immeasurable corruptions of which its moral faculties have been rendered capable. The third fact was, that Judea groaned under all the miseries of relentless oppression, its religion borne down by the weight of desecration and superstition, and its morals laid waste by the introduction of Roman luxury accompanied by the vices of that licentious people; a condition whose degradation is deepened by the circumstance, that the Jewish nation had been peculiarly separated from an idolatrous world to be the depository of the oracles of God.

Now, in view of that great assemblage of circumstances, with the advent of Christ, at that especial crisis, I raise a question: Were these facts the results of a capricious contingency, or the ordering of a Divine Providence, equally intelligent, powerful, and wise?

I affirm the *latter;* and the argument constitutes the second part of this discourse.

II. The objects of Messiah's mission were, to enlarge and establish the doctrines of that holy religion, already proclaimed by patriarchs and prophets; to present to the world an example of the sublime morality essential to the Gospel, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness, through the atonement of the cross.

Reason recognises it as an original axiom, that he who claims to be the great Teacher and Saviour of mankind, must be set apart to the office by a singular personal and official distinction, appropriate to his work not only, but calculated to attract and engage the attention of the world to himself. Reason holds it to be equally self-evident that it is essential to so extraordinary a character, that he should present himself and his mediation to the regards of the world, at a period when by all its circumstances, it is best situated to weigh his doctrines, to examine his religion, and to investigate his authenticity. These propositions, with the second of which we are now concerned, were met by the Messiah in the most entire manner, both in the facts of his personal history and in the time of his advent.

That assemblage of civil and moral, of intellectual and religious circumstances, which we have just noted as distinguishing the Age of Christ in so remarkable a manner, constituted it above any that preceded or has followed it, and in all respects, the ripe, full age for his appearance. And now to show that this was definitely designed, and positively produced by divine Providence, I appeal

1st. To the state of religion. During a long course of time, mankind had been allowed to test, and that upon a large scale, the application of sacred economies of every name and variety. The results of the whole, both separately and unitedly, exhibited the necessity of divine interposition, and the value of the institutions such an interposition should afford. Of these economies the two most celebrated, were the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, and the ritual of Moses; of the former of which the principle was idolatry, and of the latter, the revelation of the true God.

The term idol signifies in general a figure or representation, and in a religious sense an image, picture, or symbol of the Deity. And idolatry is the homage paid to such images or symbols, although their first use professed no more than a design to employ them as means of the divine worship. Its origin is assignable to an antiquity so remote as to be dated, most probably, within a few years from the time of the deluge. Those descendants of Noah who were called Cushites, under the direction of Nimrod, the

earliest political ruler of whom we have any knowledge, laid the first foundation of a state government, or national dominion, in the year of the world seventeen hundred and fifty-seven, and just a century after the flood. To the boldness and enterprise, to the ingenuity and art of this people, the world seems to be indebted for many influences affecting its condition and history, even down to the present time. And their inventive genius is thought to have introduced this extraordinary perversion of religion during the very life of Noah, whose piety and preservation had connected him in such unparalleled relations with the true God.

It sprang from the moral depravity of our fallen nature: that profound enmity against God and goodness which carnality always cherishes. And accordingly, wherever and however it has been found, its debasing and fatal tendencies have been manifest in the wretchedness of the people, in the want of all just sense of moral rectitude, and in the prevailing cruelty, sensuality, and enormities. When the confusion of tongues smote the proud builders of Babel, and scattered the Cushites abroad, this new and terrible evil spread itself out in every direction from its birth-place, on the plains of Shinar. Whether we follow them in their wanderings and their isolated settlements, in the power and grandeur of the empire founded at Babylon, into Egypt or Canaan, into Greece or Italy, we shall behold the perpetuating of their idolatry, and the overwhelming of the worship of the true God and the traces of the true religion. Prosperity hastened its progress, and reverses offered no check to the growing superstition. Power spread over it the mightiness of a public patronage, and a defeat in war inflicted no disaster on its enchanting delusions. Its history presents many changes in its aspect, from its rudeness in a barbarous state, to its refinement among a polished people; yet its leading principles and its practical results are one and indivisible, depraved ignorance and ruinous corruptions. Even in the state of most magnificent elevation to which it ever reached, the classic mythology of Greece and Rome, we have already seen that it was wholly incapable of any other effect than languor and stupefaction—while its very grandeur revealed its utter insufficiency, and as well, the absurdity of the popular fables and superstitions.

This, then, is the great doctrine taught by the state of Gentile religion in the Age of Christ, that the world by its own wisdom knew not God. Could fallen man ever find the way to God; could the energies of reason ever throw off the miserable vanities of heathenism, unassisted by heavenly teaching, that must have been the time, and they the men to accomplish so vast and good a work, when the philosophy and intellectual refinement of the Romans had ascended to their zenith. But the most enlightened teachers, involved in absolute uncertainty in any attempt they may have made to correct their overgrown evils, were confounded amid their own chimeras and subtilties. And although surround-

ed by the splendors of creation, manifesting an eternal power and divinity, they failed to arrive at any satisfactory knowledge of a Godhead, or any settled conclusion whether they should survive the wreck of nature, and live beyond the grave. Hence they either sank down in helpless imbecility among the follies of their idolatry; or, laughing at portents and omens, at Pluto's kingdom and Elysian fields, yielded to the tendencies which drew them on to atheism.

The ritual of Moses, tracing its origin to revelations and inspiration of the most High God, running parallel with the defection of the race—partially unfolded in the call and covenant of Abraham, was fully established in the divine legation of the prophet, by whose name it is distinguished. It gradually ascended from the limitations of a single promise and a single sacrifice, until it stood forth unrivalled at once in structure, in sublimity, and in truth.

But its high estate it did not keep. From a variety of causes, it lost much of its piety; it became so secularized, that the true character of the Messiah, whom it shadowed forth, was lost to view; and so corrupted, that the great objects of its own spirit, and of his mission, were almost wholly misunderstood. Indeed, multitudes of chief men and rulers openly adopted the opinions of the Sadducees, a system of inveterate infidelity. And even in Palestine, the land of promise, and so long the land of wonders, the state of things had become yet more deplorable than in the heathen countries with which it was associated. There, where the glory of the true and only church of God on earth had shone forth in all the majesty of the divine presence; where their rites and institutions had been more rational and sublime, as well as more costly and splendid, than in the public service of any other nation; where the inspired instructions of holy prophets, and the interposition of an Almighty wisdom, had built up safeguards around the altars of religion—even *there*, successive apostacies had weakened the power of faith, and spread an almost universal impiety upon the souls of men.

In reference to their miserable condition, we may call to mind the numerous passages of the Evangelists, in which the great Teacher has described the people as "lost sheep," and their leaders as "blind guides," and denounced their fanaticism and hypocrisy, their ostentation and spiritual pride, their wickedness and infidelity. We may listen also to Paul, declaring that, through their notorious vices, their religion had become an object of calumny and satire among the heathen nations; "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, through you." And we may read his delineation of their speculative theology and practical atheism—of their prevailing degeneracy, and contemptuous neglect of all virtue, when he says, in his epistle to Titus: "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable, and unto every good work reprobate."

From these views of the state of both Gentile and Jewish religion, it is clearly seen that, on the one side, mankind had put to the test the most accomplished mythology they could invent, and had studied human duty and human happiness, in the strong light of an unexampled mental meridian, and that the power of idolatry to corrupt, and the insufficiency of philosophy to restore, were fully manifested; and that, on the other side, the total incapacity of a system of splendid types and imposing ceremonials to preserve and to purify the human soul, when that system, by voluntary and long-continued faithlessness, was divorced from the truth, spirituality, and exaltedness, with which its divine founder had invested it, was proved with equal certainty.

This then was a *marked* juncture. This was a "fulness of time" for the appearance of a divine Teacher, who would introduce a pure system of morals, and erect the institutions of a wise and an enduring religion. This was a time when the contrast would be most prominent; when men were prepared, by the state of learning, to search his character, to examine his evidences, to compare his doctrines, and, through jealousy, scepticism, and inquisitiveness, to be preserved from imposition. And it was at *this* very juncture, just at this fulness of time, that Christ came to be the teacher and Saviour of men.

Had the Incarnation taken place at an earlier age, it must have been unattended by the evidence of that combination of circumstances, so strikingly demonstrative of its utility and necessity, while the prevalence of ignorance would have precluded all adequate investigation of its claims. Had it occurred in a later period, the wars and divisions which soon after broke up the peace and the kingdoms of the world, and brought learning to a deep declension, although they were instrumental in diffusing among the nations a knowledge of the cross, would have proved highly unfavorable to the objects of the Advent.

Now, to what conclusion, I ask, does all this tend, if not to show that a Divine Providence, pursuing its own great purposes, inspected and controlled all those moral and intellectual circumstances, infallibly conducting them to their remarkable crisis, and, with purpose aforethought, sending Him forth, who is the Christ, the Son of God? The character of the Age, and the character of the Messiah, having so singular an adaptation each to the other, although in themselves so vastly different, could never have arisen from fortuitous occurrences. The "fulness of the time" unanswerably argues the design proposed, and the accomplishment wrought by a wise and powerful Providence.

2ndly. I appeal, in the second place, to the political state of the world, which discloses the purpose and superintendence of Divine Providence, in a manner still clearer and more impressive. In this part of my argument I shall rely on two grand prophetical annunciations, which, through a long succession of years, associat-

ed the Age of Christ with the occurrence of two great national crises, assigning them as, at once, the period and the evidence of this Advent.

(1.) The first of these prophecies was delivered in Egypt, by the patriarch Jacob, when, shortly before his death, he predicted to his sons what should befall their descendants in after ages. The holy seer foretold the exalted character and the legislative and regal dignities to which the posterity of Judah should attain. And he added the impressive and solemn assurance, that "the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come:" or, in other words, that the time when Judah's regal authority should fail, and his political existence should be stricken with the pangs of dissolution, should be also the time when Shiloh, the prosperous author of salvation, should appear.

But where is the tribe of Judah now? By what proofs of genealogy shall it be identified? And where, through so many generations, have been the pomp and rule of Judah's royal line? We have already seen that the kingdom was borne down by Roman power, above fifty years before the Advent, so that at the birth of Christ, a feeble glimmer only of their departing glory continued to linger around the sceptre once wielded by David and his successors; and when, in his twelfth year, the dethronement of Archelaus was followed by the incorporation of the country with the province of Syria, Judah's sovereignty was finally extinguished, and the lawgiver had departed from between his feet for ever—Shiloh had come, and Jacob's prediction was fulfilled.

Nor was it long from thence when Jerusalem sent up, from tower and from palace, the blaze of a thousand fires, to light the conquering hosts of Rome on their work of ravage and destruction. Then the fallen altars, the demolished walls, the smouldering ruins of its once gorgeous and solemn temple, became the irrefragable evidences that every thing which that dispensation could effect had been accomplished, and that its glory had gone down, never to reascend. It was only seventy years from the Incarnation, that the fall of that famed and proud metropolis buried beneath its ruins the last hope of Judah's civil polity; and the Jewish state, overwhelmed with guilt and carnage, disappeared from among the governments of the earth.

(2.) The second of these prophetical annunciations is contained in Daniel's inspired description and interpretation of the Chaldean monarch's forgotten dream.—In the visions of the night, a symbolical representation of his own empire, and its succeeding monarchies, arose to the view of Nebuchadnezzar, in the form of a gorgeous image of a man, with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, body and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet partly of iron and partly of clay. This image stood before him in terrific brightness, until a stone, cut by unseen hands, from a mountain

side, fell upon its feet, and laid it in ruins. But the stone itself seemed to dash on over the crushed and scattered fragments of gold and silver, iron and clay, swelling out its own mighty proportions, until it filled the whole earth. The prophet assured the king that his own should be succeeded by empires of lesser brilliancy, but of broader power, until, in the days of the last, the God of heaven would set up a new kingdom, which, in the magnitude of its authority, and in the splendor of its institutions, should rise above, and endure beyond all others.

The monarchies typified by that image were, successively, the Chaldean, denoted by the gold; the Persian, by the silver; the Grecian, by the brass; and the Roman, by the iron and clay. And the kingdom symbolized by the stone, is the mediatorial sovereignty of Jesus Christ. The time of the introduction of this new kingdom is pointed out by the admixture of iron and clay, and by the circumstance that the stone, which destroyed the image, fell upon the feet, which were composed of those substances.

The Roman empire arose in its order, and, having triumphed over all that preceded or opposed, it ascended, as we have seen, to an exalted majesty and dominion; a majesty distinguished for its intrinsic lustre, and as having wrought the changes which issued in ultimate dismemberment. It was a moment of the deepest interest to the Roman people, to the predicted kingdom of Christ, and to the world, when Julius Cæsar clothed himself with absolute power, by merging the consular dignity in that of a perpetual dictatorship. Rome, with the forms of government which had prevailed, or been countenanced under her old constitution, was not the Rome whose dominion was sketched as one of the monarchies of the prophetic image. And this bold and bloody soldier became, unwittingly, the instrument of preparing the world for the resistless triumphs of the Prince of Peace, by introducing such changes in the Roman state, as laid the foundation of that imperial greatness, which ranked it among the imperial powers which had preceded. It was upon suspicion of his high ambition to be proclaimed a king, that he was so cruelly assassinated in the Senate-house. But this event brought no new direction into the current of affairs. The power and eminence which he had won, and the dignity to which he aspired, had a real and, to other interests, a necessary existence; and although wrenched from his own grasp, they became at length the possession of his nephew, Cæsar Octavianus, who, with Lepidus and Mark Antony, as Triumvirs, exercised despotic sway over the provinces of the republic, avenged that bloody conspiracy, by the total defeat of Brutus and Cassius, its chief perpetrators, on the plains of Macedon, a few years prior to the time of our Lord; and soon afterwards, having deprived Lepidus of his command, and conquered Mark Antony, he raised himself to the supreme power, ending the existence of the triumvirate and the republic together. Accepting the titles conferred by the Se-

But when it is added, that the Age of Christ stands attested by the accomplishment of predictions, which covered the rise and splendor, the decline and fall of the Jewish government and the Roman empire, the definite design and the controlling power of the Divine Providence have been demonstrated.

I have thus endeavored to prove and illustrate God's most holy providence, in overruling all human affairs for the accomplishment of his own sublime purposes; and it has been shown that the advent of Christ constituted an august purpose, to which all the great occurrences of foregoing history had been rendered pointedly subservient.

To deny the doctrine which I have just defended, is to affirm that plotting villainy, intriguing ambition, insatiable wickedness, and desolating wars, relieved by spare admixtures of moral and political integrity, virtue, and peace, have followed each other, in rapid and angry succession, only to result, without any design, but merely by contingency, in erecting, in the midst of our wretched and guilty world, a system of morals, order, charity, blessing, and salvation, not only beyond the power of the cultivated intellect of the golden, or any other age, to institute, but even to conceive. Now, if we could force our minds to the belief of so monstrous an anomaly, as such an affirmation must involve, still the belief would be utterly useless, being inapplicable to any pleasing or important object. But the doctrine in the illustration of which you have accompanied me, beside being commended to our faith by the clearest evidence, is beneficial in the highest sense and degree. It enables us to trace the legitimate connexion between cause and effect: it reduces to order and harmony much that, without its application, must appear to be a chaos of things: it saves from perverted judgment and painful disappointment, by establishing a higher standard of estimate than the mere expedients of political science, or the insulated interests of common life and its pursuits: it renders a knowledge of the near or remote past tributary, with greater or less directness, to a sound judgment of the nature or probable tendencies and issues of existing events, and of the plans of duty required by the scenes in which we may be engaged, the benefactions which we may enjoy, or the troubles through which we may pass, whether in private or in public relations.

In fine, it will conduct the reasonings which may be instituted upon the authentic facts of history, to the attainment of sterling and practical truth. The doctrine of Divine Providence is the true philosophy of history, of which we should never lose sight, when we look over its general records, or search into its particular details, whether civil or sacred. That doctrine teaches that the power which communicates motion to the complex machinery of mortal affairs, and controls all its actions, is the purpose of the sublime Jehovah, in favor of the church and kingdom of the blessed Jesus, —a mediatorial sovereignty, to which his incarnation and atonement have imparted an imperishable grandeur.

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SERMON CCCCLXXII.

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THE GRACE OF RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION.

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

EPHESIANS 4: 29.

MEN are social beings in the very depths of their intellectual and spiritual nature. For their use God has established various media of communication, by which they may apprise each other of their condition, their thoughts, their feelings, and their wants. All mental intercourse among human beings is conducted in this indirect way; in this way only is one mind enabled to transmit influence to another. The power of *speech* holds a distinguished place in this social arrangement. It is more used, and with less difficulty, than any other instrument of communion among men. The loss of it is an irreparable inconvenience—a vast deduction from the useful or destructive capabilities of the loser. It is probable, that more good and evil have been accomplished in this world by the simple process of *talking*, than in any other way. Talking is the frequented road of thought—always crowded with ideas, and their independent influences. The world is alive with activity of speech.

The text, as you perceive, confines its view to this important faculty; and, as such, it respects the *use*, which is to be made of this power. It is God's *institute* for the tongue. It is a *precept* imposed upon the Ephesian Christians, and equally on all; restrictive, in that it forbids men to deal in *corrupt* communications—corrupt, because they convey unholy influence, whose tendency is not to sanctify, but to do men harm. In distinction from this vice of the tongue, the passage also defines the opposite virtue—"but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."—The goodness of the communication lies in its adaptation to spiritual edification, or profit. That this was the inspired view is shown by the closing phrase—"that it may minister *grace* unto the hearers."

It will be seen at once, that *the grace of religious and spiritual conversation* is the duty inculcated in this passage. The Apostle states the duty in a general form—leaving the questions of time, place, quantity, circumstances, and special theme, to be adjusted by those who should comprehend the principle and seek to make it practical. It was sufficient for him to urge upon Christians the idea of sanctifying their power of speech, by using it to promote the religion they profess by conversation about Christ and His kingdom, such conversation as shall most effectually recommend the Saviour to others, and thus "minister grace to the hearers." These "hearers" may be separate, or several persons together; they may be Christians, or unconverted sinners; at any rate, they are "hearers"—human beings with immortal souls, and within speaking and hearing distance of those who are the children of the Heavenly King.

It would be a great diversion from the text from its true scope, were it limited to the official and public act of preaching the Gospel. It plainly refers to those more familiar interchanges of thought which occur in the *private* walks of life, in the family circle, in the little groups of friendship, or the conferential assemblies of God's people. It refers to religious communion in a simple, natural, and familiar way. The communion may relate to a statement of hopes, a narration of God's spiritual dealings with the soul, an exhibition of doctrinal views, the rebuke of fidelity, exhortation to some specific duty, or the voice of solemn warning to the wicked. Whatever be its shape and occasion—things varying with circumstances — the *design* is to do good, to "minister grace to the hearers," whether pious or impenitent. An intelligent *spirituality* is the great attribute of religious conversation, essentially connected with the execution of this design. Spirituality, in reference to the speaker, is piety of thought, motive and feeling; in reference to the communication it is such thought as is suited to benefit the soul of man. It is not so much talking *about* religion, as actually *talking* religion; the very communication is freighted with those thoughts, by which God subdues, sanctifies and saves a sinner. It is the use of thought in reference to that which gives thought its value—*holiness*, to be improved in the Christian, or begun in the impenitent. The materials for this intercourse are furnished in the Sacred Oracles; and hence the practice of the grace supposes our acquaintance with the book of God. When we talk, as Christians, we talk from, and under the light of the Bible, and communicate to others what this holy book has given to us.

Having thus unfolded the theme of this discourse, I now ask you to reflect on a series of reasons, which may serve to enforce its importance, and by its importance influence our practice. Though a common, it is, nevertheless, one of the most important subjects in the whole range of Christian ethics. The errors of practice here are many and deep seated; and the torpor of con-

science alarming. Let us then endeavor to open our eyes, and come to the light of truth.

I. The Scriptures give us very ample instruction in respect to the proper use to be made of the power of speech.

There are various *vices* of the tongue, which the Bible most sternly condemns. They are censoriousness, railing, tale-bearing, whisperings, backbiting, slander, flattery, lying, blasphemies, evil speakings, filthy communications, even idle talking. In respect to the production of such fruits, the tongue is denominated "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Jehovah has legislated against their existence, and through the lips of the Saviour, taught us, that for every idle word we shall give an account in the day of judgment. As preventive of such evils, we are commanded to put a bridle on the tongue; and if we do not obey, though we may "seem to be religious," still, our "religion is vain." God does not concede to us the right to use the noble power of speech for purposes that are wrong. We cannot innocently transmit an evil passion through this channel; it is God's channel, for he made it. The immorality of the heart becomes doubly malignant, and is sharpened in all its outlines, when the fury of words is lent to its power. Hence the wise Lawgiver has stationed a statute at the heart, condemnatory of the evil feeling—and another at the door of the heart, solemnly interdicting its expression, designating the vice as it rises to the surface, and making it penal not to suppress it in both of its abodes. The man who assumes to himself the right of saying what he pleases, is at war with God; and in due season he will be called into judgment upon this question.

The restrictive precepts of the Scriptures are only a part of the truth; they do not impose an absolute silence as the corrective for an evil tongue. While God restrains in one direction, He has explicitly commands and impels in the other. Having given His precepts and promises to the children of Israel, He subjoins this direction in respect to their use—"Ye shall teach them your children, *speaking* when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." In this enactment provision is made for a system of oral, familiar, and religious instruction. Obedience to its principle would make every household a school of Christ, soften and chasten the heart, give to the character the best form of spiritual chiseling, which it is in the power of man to bestow The neglect of Eli to perform the duty of parental religious speaking was a part of the sin that brought upon his offspring the curse of God. The Psalmist speaks of the tongue as his "glory;" and summons it to action in poetic, as well as religious rapture—"Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp; I myself will awake early" —"I will sing and give praise, even with my glory." In the days of Malachi, the mass of the people had turned away from God; some of them, however, had not. This is the record which

the prophet makes of the latter—"Then they that feared the Lord *spake often* one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." They met each other very frequently; and religion was their theme when they met; God approved, took pleasure in their holy conversation, and promised to remember them when he should make up His jewels. If we turn to the New Testament, we find the most ample fullness of perceptive teaching on this subject—"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man"—"But that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers"—But *speaking* the truth in love may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ:" not simply *thinking* it, but *speaking* it—"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." It is made our duty to reprove and warn the wicked; to exhort one another to love and good works; to comfort the disconsolate and afflicted with the words of Christ; to testify to all men in regard to the worth of the Gospel; not to deny but to speak for Christ. How can we perform one of those duties if we withold the service of our lips, and omit to adorn our social intercourse with the themes of the Gospel? Their performance is obviously incompatible with silence.

Without a further deduction of ideas from the word of God, permit me to press a single question on your thoughts: what are manifestly the spirit and scope of Sacred Scripture in regard to the point before us? Does it not suppose, that the followers of Christ shall talk of Him, much and often, to each other and the wicked, while on their way to glory; *tell* what they know, and ask the world to take the prize bought with a Saviour's blood? Do you believe that the habit of religious taciturnity represents the spirit of the Bible? Is it the tendencey of this book to generate an incommunicative and paralyzed silence? Such a tendency lies neither in the precepts of the Scriptures nor in their legitimate effects upon the character of man. The whole current of the Bible is strongly in the opposite direction. What then should we be if we were precisely what the Book of God supposes we ought to be? I answer; *communicating* Christians, every one of us; not a *mute* saint would be found on the globe, unless the God of nature had denied to him the power of speech; every mouth would be open, and every tongue on fire with the wisdom and goodness of God. This would disperse the epidemic of silence, and give a healthier air to the Church and the world. We might not all be equally eloquent, or learned, or graceful, or equally wise in the details of religious speech; but we should all have something to say for our Master. The generic diathesis of our spirits would be toward the work of communication, and specific occasions would reveal it. Is not

its absence a sin, whose nature the conscience is to behold, whose existence a purer piety is to annihilate? Judge ye.

II. Religious conversation is the noblest use to which man can apply the power of speech.

The divine intention in the creation of man is, that he should be a *religious* being — that he should on earth know and observe his Maker's will, and in eternity enjoy his favor for ever. Assuming this as an axiom, then, beyond a question, human endowments in their ultimate scope must be referred to religion for their end and true interpretation. Reason is given to man, that he may discover God's existence, and sufficiently comprehend him intelligently to worship Him; the susceptibility of affection, that he may love God; the capacity for faith, that he may trust Him; the complex mechanism of a free will, that his acts may have a relation to law, from which a moral character may arise. To these gifts of creation, revelation is added, to shed light where sin had produced darkness; and Christ is offered, that the sinner may see the mode of his return to a forsaken God. Now in an economy of existence, in which religion defines the great end of each existing being, will you tell me for what is bestowed the power of speech? The evident design is, that by the use of this power the possessor may translate from himself to others whatever he may know, think, and feel as a religious being. This is pre-eminently its design—one of more significance than any other which is conceivable. The soul being made the theatre of light, as is always implied in the supposition of true piety, provision is made that it may socially shed that light by an appropriate collocation of words. Speech is an attribute of man's social nature; his social nature relates chiefly to the development of religious ends, and rises far above his present convenience as a mere animal; therefore, speech was given to him primarily for religious use. I can easily imagine that those whose views do no justice to the chief end of our existence, will fail to appreciate this estimate of the speaking faculty; but I hope, it will be neither unintelligible nor unprofitable to those who see in religion the true and ultimate interpretation of all else they see or know. Nature is never explained in its final cause, until the exegesis of religion is invoked. Without this it appears as a wilderness of worlds, a vast organism of matter, having no language; a music of the spheres, without rhythm, accent, or harmony; a huge and soulless monotone, with no rational cadence. Religion, with its ideas of God and man, drops the robe of light on all material forms, dignifies the universe, forms the grand perspective of being. It is no wonder that those sink into the mire and stay there, whose ideas ascend not to this lofty level; they understand neither themselves nor their God.

Let us, then, if you please, distinctly state the thought we would endeavor to see. Speech, in the very design of the grant,

is elevated to the religious sphere; it is part of the machinery of a world, or rather an universe, to exemplify the power and realize the ends of religion, as it respects both the glory of God and the good of his dependent creatures. Inquiry confined to the physiology of the voice, treating of the inflections, cadence, melody, and harmony revealed in the curious mechanism; such inquiry reaches not the true philosophy of speech; however learned it is on the surface, for the noblest of all the relations of speech is unseen, i. e., its relation to the communication of religious truth.—This theatre must open before we can understand the moral rhetoric and elocution of vocal sounds. Religion, the greatest subject with God and the greatest for man, then appears as a passenger in the divinely contrived vehicle, honoring it and honored in it.—Earth becomes a bed of telegraphic wires, to hasten the march of the holy guest.

For practical elucidation, behold a Christian in the simplicity and earnestness of love, telling all men whom he can reach, what he knows of Christ and his kingdom; giving to others his own ideas and feelings, without losing either. What say you of his employment? Is he not using the power of speech for the very purpose for which it was chiefly given? Is not the motive by which he is governed the very noblest that can influence man? Is there any thing upon the field of motive richer than a predominating desire to make known the religion of the Bible? any thing better for conversation than God and His Gospel? Can you conceive of a higher moral state on earth than is found in that man whose heart is so religiously laden, that he *must* utter his thoughts, to whom it is a privilege to tell what a precious Saviour he has found, and invite all others to "come and see?" Would you have him hold the treasure in silent possession and social exclusion? Look at the theme which animates and fires his tongue, and is poured out in the words he utters. How sacred those words—how sublime that language, which holds such a polished gem! See also the point whence his ideas take their departure—his own soul. See where they go—to the soul of another. His reasons and affections have taken hold of God and the Gospel; and now, by the use of speech, he is seeking to make these objects known. Let him proceed, whether in the Christian pulpit, the prayer-meeting, the private parlor, on board the steamboat, in the rail-car, or by the way-side; let him *talk*, when he has such glorious things of which to speak. Speech was never better used; articulated sounds never vibrated upon a higher errand. Speech, in this case, is reason on its mission of blessing. What better thing can reason do, than to talk with men about God and eternity? How much better this than the worthless words with which so much of life is wasted! It will appear better on high than the purest secular eloquence that ever stirred a nation's passion, or soothed its fears. When the *eclat* of senate chambers shall be forgotten and thrown among the ruins of by-

gone worlds, then the religious use of speech shall be preserved in the archives of immortality; and, in its good effects, remain, as a bright memorial of tongues that have mouldered into dust. Let us feel the sublime dignity of this power, and use it for God while we may.

III. The religious use of speech is what may be justly expected of every Christian person.

It is a fact, and every Christian professes to admit it, that he is under obligation to do his utmost to make all men truly religious, to enrich them with "the unsearchable riches of Christ." This is the minimum of his promise to Christ, and of his covenant with the friends of Christ. What shall we infer from such a fact and its admission? That he would pass through life vastly more distinguished for his silence than his utterance? That he would engraft upon such a thought a profound and uniform taciturnity, as its proper or admissible consequence? Then, alas! logical gravity has turned the other way. What have you? An obligation of weightiest import existing—fully admitted, even, it may be, to a neuralgia of the conscience; and that *omitted* which is a most important method of meeting the great demand! Who can make harmony among such incongruities? Who can consent to be the strange paradox in which they dwell? Who can turn such a crooked line into a straight one?

Again, every Christian professes to have in his own experience the most precious treasure of thought; to be more deeply interested in Christ and the things of His kingdom, than in all other things put together. Surely a man does not claim to be a Christian upon a *less* profession than this. Now when you have so much devotion of feeling, such warm affections, such wonderful ideas, what do you expect? Should you suppose, or should you not, that this state of things would ever be heard of through the organs of speech? Is it characteristic of man to be silent, or communicative about that which supremely engages him? We have the Saviour's authority for saying, that "out of the *abundance* of the heart the mouth speaketh." Our own observation, also, must have taught us that the remark is true. Men who are intensely devoted to the accumulation of wealth, are incessantly talking upon the subject; it is their principal theme; their reading, reflections, enquiries, and remarks, naturally run in this direction. You find a warm and enthusiastic politician, and you will see a man whose conversation is distinctly marked by the state of his heart. The amateur of elegant literature, the connoisseur of the fine arts, the devotee of amusement, the mechanic in his workshop, the maniac in his cell, even the boy with his kite and top; all have tongues, and by their use reveal the predominating perceptions and feelings of their minds. Not more truly is gravitation a law, than is sympathy between the state of the soul and the organs of speech. Judging human nature, therefore, by its known laws, should we infer that

Christians would be conversational as such, or profoundly silent? If they be silent, it is clearly an exception to a general principle of humanity; and as it is contrary to our expectation from the nature of the case, we demand for it a special reason. What shall this reason be? A little time spent in reconnoitering this ground may not be labor lost.

It cannot be said with truth, that the themes of the Gospel are such as to admit of no conversational use; or that they are of no spiritual service when thus used. It ought not to be said, that Christian conversation tramples upon the proprieties of refined social etiquette. The man who thus feels would do well to take some lessons in "the etiquette of heaven." An etiquette that studiously shuts out the wisdom of God, is not such as a child of grace ought to respect; it is Satan's fashion to ruin souls. Let us suppose the reason for which we are in quest, to be, that the Christian habitually feels *little or no disposition* to speak of the things of Christ; that his tongue labors and soon grows weary in attempting to carry the theme; and, therefore, he does not speak. Retaining the supposition, that he is a Christian, what he professes to be, you then have the following case: his heart is supremely devoted to the Saviour, the religion of the Bible has the chief place in his thoughts; and yet he is uniformly disposed to be silent upon the greatest theme of his own soul; that is, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" *not*. Who can make these things cohere? To state such a case is to reveal its fallacy. Suppose again the reason to be, that the Christian has nothing to say, no ideas, experiences, or hopes to communicate. This being the reason, then the religion of the blessed Saviour does not so dwell in his mind that he can make it a theme of conversation. He is not familiar with the subject; and his want of familiarity is so great, that, when he undertakes to express ideas which he supposed he had, he discovers, either that he has no such ideas, or that they are so exceedingly obscure that he cannot tell what they are, and dare not trust them in the form of words. What a state of Christian knowledge is this! Who has a right in this land of Bibles, Sabbaths, pulpits, and instructive institutions, to pass through a whole pilgrimage, knowing as little about Christianity, as the confession adverted to implies? All the interests of his being are professedly committed to it: committed to what? He says, he cannot tell you what; the nearest he can come to it is, that it is *something*. How can his heart make progress in spirituality; how can he hope with clearness, believe with power, love with strength; I had almost said, how can he be a Christian? A Christian, whose knowledge is such that he can never command it for social use, presents a most horrible poverty of intellect; it is both his sin and his loss; and he should seek a better state, even if it cost him the pain of martyrdom to do it. It is appalling to think, that a child of grace, an heir of heaven, should be willing to live in such a

mental condition. Such a reason for silence, upon due reflection, is enough to make the soul shudder; it is even *worse* than the silence itself. You may be assured, that nearly all the truth which powerfully impresses you, you can convey to some extent. That which evaporates when subjected to the accuracy of a verbal statement, was a mental vapor, and not a preception of much power upon your own heart. It may again be supposed, that the Christian pleads his *constitutional diffidence?* that he has not an easy command of words; that he cannot communicate his ideas on any subject with the freedom and fluency of some others. Admitting the fact to be as stated, then it is pertinent to ask the brother this question: whether he permits diffidence, this alleged want of tact in the use of words, to keep him in a state of uniform silence on *other* subjects; and if not, why on the subject of religion? He is a merchant. You enter his store for the purposes of trade; and at once perceive that his words do not flow as rapidly as those of many other men. The question is: does he yield to his diffidence, or do the best he can; state his prices and offer all honorable inducements for you to buy? The uniform practice of even the most diffident of men is too well known to need any description. Why should they not treat the things of Christ in the same way; make the best social use of religion that lies within the compass of their powers? If others, with better gifts and fewer impediments, can excel them in this particular, what is that to them? It need excite neither their pride nor their envy: let each use his own gifts and be content. How, again, will the diffident man ever overcome his felt embarrassment, and make the religious use of speech comparatively easy work? By *doing* the very thing which he feels diffident in attempting to do. There is no other way to gain the victory. Shall he then yield to his diffidence, sink down into the settled habit of silence, and thus greatly decrease his usefulness; or shall he conquer it, and enlarge his usefulness? I suppose no Christian, however diffident, has a spiritual right to dodge this question; he is bound to have a conscience, and let it act upon the point. There are also, many other questions he would do well to answer, i. e., What is the precise *quantity* of diffidence which is a lawful plea for silence? What is the amount of talent, as compared with others, at which a man may venture to speak for Christ? Why is it that when the heart is warmed this diffidence is sometimes overcome? Why is it that some of our intelligent christians, even learned men, are diffident here, but not so anywhere else? Why is it that some can speak very fluently in a business meeting of the church about questions of finance, and yet so strangely lose the power of speech in a religious and devotional meeting of God's people?

I will not detain you to explore this list of reasons to greater length. The general muteness of so many of Christ's disciples is truly a great evil—a vast loss of power in converting the

world. As we think of the loss, we cannot feel much disposed to encourage its cause, or look very favorably upon the reason urged in defence of that cause. In opposition to all these reasons it still remains true, that we may justly expect of a Christian man a great amount of spiritual conversation, as he passes through the eventful scenes of life. By his profession he has such treasures of thought, such affections of heart, as we should suppose it would be difficult for him to conceal; indeed we should infer, that he would have no *disposition* to make the concealment. Until human nature shall be radically changed, it is fair to infer a Christianity eminently *social* from one that is purely and eminently *spiritual*. There are no processes of reasoning which can set aside this inference, without involving some dangerous fallacy. Who shall make the religion of the blessed Saviour thus social? Those who have it. How? by silence, or by speech?

The strength of the inference from the obligation and professions of every saint is also very much increased when we add the fact, that he has in his possession what many others are rejecting, and for which rejection are in danger of losing their souls. The storm, which is rising over them, is prophetic of a fearful doom. He, the Christian, sees it; his benevolence is supposed to yearn with interest as he looks; he sees the appointed method of escape; has embraced it himself. Now, what think you of such a man in such premises? Is it probable, or not, that he will warn the wicked, entreat them to be reconciled to God through Christ? Can it be that he will pass them in total silence, and mingle with them from day to day, not even whispering to them the note of danger, or telling them of Christ and his power to save? Think you that this Christian will ever go to the home of an unconverted sinner for the specific purpose of preaching the Gospel to him? As he meets him by the way-side, will he ever talk to him about immortality and his great interests therein? Will he urge him to improve the brief sojourn of life for happiness and heaven? Suppose that he should do this, that *every* Christian were thus to act; would it not be in accordance with what may be fairly expected? Suppose that he does *not* do so, that he never seriously and spiritually conversed with an unconverted sinner in all his life-time, or that it is his general habit to pass this class of persons silent about their souls; then you have a case of which it is extremely painful to think. Is religion with him a *fable?* Then let him be honest and say so; but if not, let him not *act* as if it were a fable. In the name of Christ we claim that his life should not be such a practical denial of his own professions. Sinners, who need his influence, may press him with the same claim.

IV. The life of the Christian is attended with numerous occasions which imperatively summon him to the religious use of speech.

By the very terms of his existence the disciple of Christ is

thrown into the bosom of human society. Here he spends his days, forms his character, exerts his influence, and prepares for heaven. Being thus closely impacted with others, he is of necessity, not only receiving, but also extending social contacts in all directions—when he thinks of it, and when he does not think of it.—He cannot, if he would, and he should not if he could, repeal this great law, which presides over his earthly existence. Under its operation, in the course of even a very short life, he is brought a great many thousand times into social proximity to those who are travelling with him to the bar of God. With some he is especially intimate. They are members of his own family—his "kindred according to the flesh;" or they are his associates in business, his patrons in commerce; or by the affinities of friendship they are affectionately allied to him. He sees them often—as often speaks to them; indeed, a large part of his life passes away in the circle which he and they mutually form.

Again, he has Christian associations; he meets his fellow heirs on the Sabbath, in the prayer-meeting, by the way-side; he, more or less, meets them wherever he goes. He is sometimes in contact with those who know more, and at others with those who know less than himself. He has to do with men in almost every variety of mental condition. The thoughtless and careless, who trifle with God and His truth—the gay and giddy butterflies of the passing hour—the anxious on whose souls eternal things have made their awful impress—the young, buoyant with the elasticity of life's opening morning—the aged, seared and withered by the lapse of years—the afflicted, with their sensibilities set to the key of tenderness, and symphonious with the counsels and consolations of the Gospel—the sick and dying, on the brink of immortality, and soon to be ushered into the midst of eternal scenes; all these persons lie across his path; he passes by them on his way to glory, and so near them that he cannot help seeing them. They are entirely within his reach, and supply an occasion for him to do an important duty.—Such occasions are distributed along his journey from day to day. As they do not come in masses, so they cannot be met and improved in masses. The humble and Christ-like mode of doing good in *detail* is the only one that corresponds with the appointed circumstances of human existence.

Let us now suppose, that the general habit of this Christian is to be religiously silent; that he marches round the whole circle of his social relationships spiritually dumb as a marble statue; that he never introduces the themes of his Saviour anywhere; that he is even reluctant to engage in Christian conversation, and if it be forced upon him, quite willing to let it drop; that he does not warn the wicked, or speak to his brethren with any freedom, interest, or relish of soul; that even in his own family his voice is seldom heard uttering words for Christ. Is this man fulfilling the mission, created by the social premises of his existence? I cannot make

myself think that he is. I have heard all his excuses; and they seem lighter than a feather, when compared with the argument, which proceeds from the social facts of his present being. These facts are so many *alarm-bells*, rung by the hand that made the universe; and their language is as intelligible as Jehovahs voice when he spake on Mount Sinai. Why should not this Christian give to Christ and to society, at every appropriate angle of contact, the sacred use of speech? Can he tell why? Let him be careful that he does not defend his silence by an argument, that would make him dumb amid Cherubim and Seraphim on high. Has God lighted within his soul the lamp of immortal love—enriched his understanding with the pure jewels of Gospel thought; and shall he extinguish the holy blaze, and wrap in sepulchral gloom the best treasure of his mind? Shall he do this, when society without him cries for an open mouth and a Christian speech? To whom would he commend his own example? Not to his minister—not to any Christian on the globe. He is practically an exception to an argument, whose general excellence he acknowledges—but from whose controlling power he makes his escape in the use of reasons, which even he will condemn when left alone to his own reflections. In what way he will reply to the recriminations of the lost, by him unwarned, it exceeds all human ingenuity to guess. That any Christian should be in contact with such an amount of *possible* good—and yet do so little, is appalling. How can it be? How can we consent to make such a case our own, when we must so soon meet Him—who will make inquisition for blood? Let us remember, that "to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Let us not incur a mountain of guilt by the negations of our Christian life.

V. The religious use of speech is an essential element in giving to the world a Christian example.

It is familiar to you all, that in the Scriptures the disciples of Christ are regarded as examples—living specimens of the power of the Gospel. What is it to be an example? It is to set forth illustrate, and unfold something, so that others may see it. In the very nature of things, an example cannot be negative or latent—it must be a positive disclosure, sufficiently so to cross the abyss between solitude and society, and meet the intelligence of others. If it be less than this, it is not an example, any more than a grain of dust at the bottom of the ocean. Again, what is the thing to be set forth by a *Christian* example? It is its province to represent to the intelligence of others the religion of Christ, not only as a system of doctrines, but also in its delightful and saving effects upon the heart of him who gives the example. In it you have the procession of eternal wisdom through a sanctified soul to another, whether sanctified or not—the radiation of borrowed light. He who gives such an example, becomes a medium of vision to, and impression upon, other minds. The spiritual phases of his own soul are uncovered, turned outwards, and lie on

the plane of a social visibility, He presents the illuminated disk of his own heart in every position of the moral orbit, shewing the image of Christ, for travellers to the world immortal to look and to read.

We come then to the more specific question—By what *method* shall a Christian make such a disclosure—realize such a representation—give an example becoming to his professiou? It is very common to reply that he must do so by the general manner and course of his life. I do not object to this answer; but will simply ask for its explanation. What does it mean? Does it mean that he is not to be guilty of gross immoralities? A great many sinners are not thus guilty; and do they give a Christian example? Is this negation the full altitude of the conception? Does it mean that he goes to church, outwardly keeps the Sabbath, abstains from profanity, gives his money for religious uses, is a quiet, honest, and respectable man? All these things are true of many in the ranks of impenitence. Does it mean, that in private he reads the Bible, lifts up his voice to God in prayer, and cherishes devout meditations in the solitude of his own heart? If so, then what he does in private, is no example to others, since it is unknown to them. The hearer will please to observe, that I do not object to a single one of the above specifications; I am glad, that the man whom he is picturing, is as good as the description implies. The things, I admit, bear an essential relation to the supposition of a Christian example. My difficulty lies just at this point: this good man has the powers of speech; in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, in all ordinary concerns, it is by the use of these powers that he unfolds the contents of his soul, unless silence be prompted by some sinister or selfish motive; indeed, the very character which he has among his fellow men, depends largely upon the use he has made of his tongue; and in these circumstances, I find it difficult to complete the conception of a Christian example in the manner and course of a man's life, unless religious and spiritual conversation be a part of that manner. You seal up his lips for any reason, and the sun of his Christian character is more than half eclipsed; it is but the small segment of a circle which you can then see. The supposition blockades the principal channel through which his thoughts and affections most readily, naturally, and powerfully flow. He is at once, more than *half dead*, so far as the circle is concerned in which he may move. Whatever else he may do or omit, his uniform silence will be an immense deduction from his Christian example. It belongs to this example, is integral in the very idea, that he should frequently and freely speak to others of Christ and his cause. How shall Christ dwelling in him as "the hope of glory," or his word abiding in him "richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;" how shall they go forth, unless he throw open the doors of the soul? The moment he puts a chain upon his tongue, he sinks his power to a lower level; and if he has

always chained it, then he has never made such an exhibition of Christianity as it was, and now is his privilege and duty to make.—Be it remembered, that the simple reputation of being a Christian by having joined the church, together with the absence of any imputations necessarily assailing this reputation, is but a *small* part of that pious and powerful testimony for the Saviour, which a good man may render, if he will. Can it be less than his duty, to adorn and sanctify his conversation with the themes of the Gospel;—to act as if they were congenital with the piety of his heart? Will not this give his example the brightest lustre, and place his own piety in the most palpable form for transmission and impression? He may be wise in using the sacred treasure; but let him never be wise in *not* using it.

VI. Finally, the *benefits* which are to accrue from religious and spiritual conversation, most powerfully enforce the duty.

Suppose that in these religious interviews, the parties are Christians, and that they unite in a free and affectionate interchange of thought for mutual improvement in knowledge and grace. Suppose it to be a general *habit* among the followers of Christ, to speak "often one to another," as was the case with those who feared the Lord in the days of Malachi. What are to be the good effects upon them, as resulting from such a course? Does not every hearer believe that they will be much profited;—that their social interviews will become—what they often are not—valuable means of spiritual culture? I have not time for much detail on this point; and yet, you will indulge me sufficiently to hear two or three remarks.

This habit would greatly promote the *fraternal* spirit among Christians. Their religious intimacy would generate a feeling of nearness, and strengthen the tie of Christian union. They would seem to each other less like strangers, and more like familiar and cherished friends. Their intercourse would develop the charms of a mutual sympathy; make it difficult for the seeds of discord to grow in such a soil. It is well known, that the suspension of intercourse fosters indifference, and sometimes alienation of feeling. The warmest affections will lose their freshness, unless they be frequently renewed. We know of no process for the renewal, except by the agreeable and pleasant contact of the beings between whom they exist. You never spent an hour in conversation with a Christian brother, which at the time interested your mind, and drew out your feelings, without being conscious of a new and warm attachment towards him. If you had some little prejudice against him, some foolish pique of soul, it subsided; took its leave of absence without your notice. Why then, should not the disciples of the common Saviour develope the fraternal spirit by this cheap and heavenly mode? That this spirit is of immense consequence to their peace, happiness, good character, and social usefulness; worthy of cultivation by a process so easy, simple, and sure, that it greatly diminishes the chances for the existance of

those evils that so often derange the harmony of Christians; these truths, surely, are too obvious to need a word of argument. A vast proportion of the unhappy feelings, the petty discords, or the more terrible convulsions which have agitated the Church of Christ, would have been prevented, had its members been more accustomed to take sweet counsel together, and cemented their heart in the unity of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

Again, this sanctified conversation has a powerful tendency to improve and enlarge the understanding. It awakens reflection; starts the mind out into new trains of thought which may be of invaluable service in the future lives of the parties. Two minds, when acting together, necessarily sharpen the contemplative powers; they are throwing out hints, posting here and there on each other's path little sentinels of thought, and breaking up the dry and stagnant dullness of mental indolence. There are very few minds, that will work with a sufficient amount of intensity to accomplish much in the region of thought, without an occasional stimulus from others; and even the most powerful need social friction to bring out their energies. Then, again, things do not always lie in the same shape in all minds; there is diversity in the points of mental prospect. By conversation these diversities are made the common property of all who participate therein—each having the opportunity to modify, confirm, or correct his own reflections in the light of others. Such a habit would give Christian intercourse a new character, and clothe it with new power. I verily believe it to be one serious fault with the interviews of Christians, that they are not made religiously *instructive*. They are not generally expected to be such—not sought with any such view; there is very little in them to produce any evolution of the intelligence; they impart no vigour to the reflective powers. The consequence is that Christians gain very little in the way of religious knowledge by their conversation. How widely different the fact would be, were they spiritually inquisitive, anxious to learn, strongly disposed to breathe an atmosphere religiously intellectual! what great benefits they would be conferring and receiving! Then Christian intelligence would not be so much wrapped in clouds—dodging amid ambiguities, and stale, as if it had not been stirred for half a century. I do not know, that it is possible in this strange world largely and extensively to realize this idea; but this I know, that, were it done, the Church would reap an immense benefit therefrom. I should be quite willing, that you should all *try* it; and then judge of the advantages in the light of your own experience.

Again, this sanctified conversation would make the things of religion vastly more *precious* in the enjoyments of the soul. Christianity must make its subject happy and cheerful in its services; or it does not begin to attain its power over his heart. He must relish the things of true piety; or it will be a *purgatory* to his mind. Now, who does not know, that this relish, this heavenly

aptitude of soul may be cultivated to almost any extent? It may be made a very delicate and most delightful frame of the spiritual man. Its culture is a very interesting part of the Christian's labor with his own heart. In this work he will derive very material help from spiritual conversation. The themes which engage his tongue, will also engage his understanding; and through the latter will be gently modifying the state of his heart. Their impression will be *left* on the heart; and before it wears away, it will be renewed by the same process; and in this way the mind will quietly but effectually assume a heavenly *habitude* of sensibility, which has permanency and power. The necessity, that the Christian, in making this attainment, should exercise himself unto the grace of spiritual conversation, grows out of this fact; that if he does not the reasons therefore will be very likely to be reasons for the want of any proper action of his understanding; without which action religion can never fold itself in the emotions and delights of his heart. Is it not a fact that, when a good man is warmed with sacred and holy feelings, it is done through the medium of his understanding? How else can it be accomplished? Is it not also a fact that pious and spiritual interviews with others have a tendency to enthrone the things of Christ in the understanding, and keep them there? In all ordinary cases whatever acts inimically to these interviews, goes farther; sweeps over the whole man. Here is a professed friend of Christ, who has little or no relish for spiritual conversation. Bring up its appropriate themes; see how silent he is—how monosyllabic his speech has become. Change the subject and his tongue begins to move, ready to take its full quantum of service. Now does that man relish spiritual *reflection* any better? I do not believe that he does; and if he does not, it is idle to suppose that the things of Christ are truly precious in the enjoyments of his soul. If he be a Christian, let him begin to think, and to read, and to pray, and to speak; let him keep up the process, until power divine shall mould his heart into a more genial and heavenly frame. He may have to undergo the pangs of a moral crucifixion; but if faithful, the sun will shine at last.

These then are some of the benefits of religious conversation, when Christians simply are the parties engaged. What a field is opened for this grace, when we slightly change the supposition; and bring an impenitent world under the influence of the Church, in the full exercise of this power! Behold the followers of the Lamb, in the deep and irrepressible earnestness of love, commending the Gospel to the unconverted; the parent entreating his child—the child, the parent—the husband, his wife, and the wife, her husband—the friend counselling his friend—Christians making the walks of social life blaze with the appeals of truth! How many souls in this way have been turned from nature's darkness into God's marvellous light! What a precious sentence was that, which fell from your lips, and was owned as the means of salvation to him, who perhaps would have perished without it! How

much good has been accomplished in this way! How much more might be! And shall not the amazing benefit awaken us to the exercise of religious speech? Our contact with the impenitent is a practical quietus to their minds, and our silence the theme of their surprise, unless we break the seal and beseech them to be reconciled to God. They reason correctly when they infer, that if we felt much, we should talk with them; insecurely, when they judge, that because we do not seem to feel much concerned for their welfare, therefore they are safe. Let us take away this refuge from their hearts, let the benefit to be gained be a sufficient reason why we should do our duty to them by kind and constant entreaty. Why should not every Christian, in his sphere, be another Harlan Page, and bestud his starry crown with gems redeemed? Are we not more silent than we shall wish to have been, when assembled millions meet for their last account?

In bringing these remarks to a close permit me to say, that a proper consideration of this subject must make every Christian feel, that he is not doing his duty to himself, or to others, and above all to his Saviour, who omits to use his means of grace. It is mournful to think of the power, which is buried and lost in consequence of the omission. Talents, that might by use be burnished and made to shine, are left to rust in the solitude of their own quiescence. Multitudes find their way into the Church, and there live and die—use up a whole probation; yet you hear little or nothing from them, in any place or time, about the great things which by profession are made the objects of their thoughts and hope. The intellectual faculties, instead of being employed to show the worth and merit of the bleeding Lamb, are chartered to find reasons for silence; and a curious collection indeed these reasons make, when all assembled into one common receptacle. They serve, however, as a sort of logical *fort*, within which an immense army of Christian *mutes* is encamped—so safely walled in that the hardest cannonading seldom reaches them. The loss, which this dispensation of silence induces, is a thought, that well deserves our deepest regret; and if anything can be done to avert the evil, the effort is worthy the preacher's tongue and the Christian's prayer.—You may be sure that it is an evil which ought to be corrected. Very *useful* Christians are communicative. And is it no evil not to be useful? Whatever makes the child of God *spiritual*, disposes him to holy speech. The scenes of a revival, the hour of affliction and the bed of death wake his tongue, and bring it into action. It is wise to begin this work in the beginning of piety. But if you did not do so, then it is wise to begin it now. Let me ask you, my brethren, to give all these thoughts free access to your conscience. Do not turn them away as an idle tale. I believe they deserve, as I trust they will receive at your hands a better treatment.

SERMON CCCCLXXIII.

BY REV. JAMES M. SHERWOOD.

CHRIST A SYMPATHIZING FRIEND AND SAVIOUR.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." HEBREWS iv., 15.

Who needs not a friend? Whose heart has not breathed the inward sigh for the ear, and bosom, and arm of sympathy? The heart of man blighted in its primeval hopes and joys, burthened with guilt and fear, pining in sorrow and want, and struggling to rise above the darkness and misery of the present, and apprehend and realize the glory and blessedness of the future,—how much it needs, and longs after, the contact and aid of a true, and powerful friendship. We have, in CHRIST, a FRIEND of profound sympathy, and infinite love, whose great heart is stirred to its very depths on our account, and whose mighty arm is reached out to befriend and save us. At an immense sacrifice He has qualified Himself for the offices of a Friend, and now proffers His services to us in this interesting and attractive character.

I. In order to be a sympathizing friend, *one must condescend to our estate and put his being in actual and living contact with our being.* While he remains without the circle of our personal ties, relations, and interests; while an immense distance intervenes, and thought and feeling, and experience, are brought into a free and living fellowship; there can be but little genuine and effective sympathy, there will be wanting that intimate knowledge of each other's being, that mutual and intelligent confidence, and that assimilation of mind and character, which constitute both the condition and bond of true friendship. If you would be my bosom friend, and warm me with your sympathy, and gain over me the power to influence and enrich my existence, you must come down from your elevation, and be my companion in the low and rugged paths I tread—humble yourself to the feeling and service of a *brother*; put your heart in contact with mine, till it shall throb with the like emotions, and consent to share in the joys and sorrows of my being.

The son of God has acted in this wise. He stooped from Heaven to embrace us; exchanged the throne for the cross; the

glory of the Godhead for the weakness of humanity. He put Himself in direct contact, and intimate relationship with us; on a footing of equality in a common nature and a common interest; bound Himself to His people in near and perpetual ties, and made them one with Him. Amazing condescension! "Mystery of godliness!" Divinity itself brought down to a level with fallen humanity; embodied in human form; possessing a human heart and a human character: so that with our eyes we "behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." In the son of Mary we have the God incarnate; in "the man of sorrows," in the sufferer of Calvary we are brought into direct contact with the active sympathy and the abounding mercy of Heaven towards sinners. He has thus made Himself our *Brother*, in nature and feeling, in service and inheritance. We have in Him a perfect Friend. His powerful sympathies are enlisted in our cause. He has humbled Himself from the heights of heaven to the depths of our fallen world, that He might bind us to his heart, and thrill our being with His love, and purify and glorify it by His grace.

What *honor*, too, is put upon human nature by the second Adam! He has clothed it with peculiar interest and lustre, by adopting it, and glorifying it in His person and office-work, as our Redeemer. He presents, also to the world, in His manhood, a perfect pattern of human excellence, for our study and imitation.

II. We expect in a friend, *those elements and exercises which lead to conformity, and constitute a bond of union.* There can be no real effective sympathy where there is no assimilation of spirit, thought, and experience. The greater the degree of *oneness*, in all the mental and moral states, and habits, and aims of a plurality of persons, the stronger is that mysterious tie, which binds their being and destiny together. Like both attracts and begets like.—There is a spontaneous flowing together, of hearts pervaded by the same sentiments, beating with the like emotions, and walking in the same paths of actual being. Who has most of your hearts confidence, and is most longed for, and leaned upon, when the services of a friend are needed? That friend, assuredly, whose being mirrors best your own likeness, and in whose experience you can best read the tale of your own joys and sorrows; he is your friend in a peculiar sense, and can comfort and serve you, when the sympathy and kind offices of all the world beside, are unavailing.

The Son of man has not only taken to Himself our nature, but the whole burden of our "infirmities." He has both condescended to our own estate, and actually walked the like dark and rugged, and suffering ways of being. He has put Himself in a position that commands a perfect view, and comprehension of the entire field, of our existence, and He, Himself, has made the circuit of that field, weeping over its moral wastes, affected by all

the objects of interest, treading all its lonely and weary paths, and participating in all the states and exercises of our fallen being. His soul was alive to the beauties of nature and of being around Him; to the lessons of Providence, and the claims of want, and grief, and affection. He ever honored the relations of life; cherished natural affection; sanctified labor by the sweat of His own brow; honored the domestic relations; observed the innocent laws and customs of society, and mingled freely in the living scenes of the world. He felt the evils of sin—the bitterness of inward conflicts and outward sufferings—the joys and griefs of friendship—the ills of life and the pangs of death, just as other men feel them. He had the affections and infirmities, the wants and sensibilities, of a man. How the stupidity and unbelief of His disciples, the treachery of His friends, and the injuries of His enemies, tried His patience! How was His soul moved to pity and to prayer, for a lost world! With what an anxious heart did he prosecute the labors of each day!—How man's guilt and misery weighed down His spirits, and taxed his energies to the fartherest point of endurance! Behold how He "endures the contradiction of sinners." How profound His grief at the grave of Lazarus. See Him weep on the Mount of Olives, as He approaches the scene of final suffering—for the last time, and with a bursting heart, spreads out His arms over Jerusalem!

What personal conflicts did he endure! The wilderness, the solitary place, and the Mount of Olives, were often the scenes of exercises, affecting and sublime; manhood sinking under the weight of a world's guilt and grief, wrestling in prayer, groaning in spirit, and working out in solitary greatness, a mighty redemption for the brethren of His adoption. Gethsemane heard the earnest burdened pleadings of human infirmity in that moaning voice which broke on the midnight hour, and thrilled the hearts of attendant angels—"O my father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me." "The hour," in which Jesus bowed under the weight of his sorrows in the garden, and embraced the earth in the intensity of His anguish, was a fearful approach to *infinity* of suffering. And on the cross, humanity bled and died. His was the death of a man keenly alive to the evil of suffering, and to the atrocious indignity offered Him—a death of excruciating agony and profound affliction. In the crowd that gathered to His cross He recognized His weeping *mother* and kindly commended her to "the beloved disciple." Filial love, and grief, lived in that noble heart till it ceased to beat. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—From the profoundest depth of creature weakness and distress, came forth that expiring cry.

There is no relation or circumstance in life, therefore, no joy or sorrow, anxiety or conflict, in which Jesus is not fully qualified to sympathize with us. He became a *man* in every thought

and feeling, and condition, sin excepted, that He might enter fully into our case, and challenge our gratitude and confidence.

III. A *perfect knowledge of us*, is essential to the character of a perfect friend. Ignorance of our case, or mere imperfection of judgment, may convert the well-meant service of a friend into actual and irreparable injury. Job's friends ignorant of his real feelings, and misjudging Providence, proved miserable comforters to the smitten patriarch. Severe and trying as were the strokes of the Almighty, they were yet more tolerable to his burdened and anguished heart, than were the rash judgments and labored speeches of those who came to condole with him in his affliction. And who has not been grieved and wronged by the false judgment or ill-timed service of his friends? A word of praise or censure, misapplied; advice, well-meant, but evil; a service rendered, kind in spirit but unwise in fact; reproof or correction withheld from a mistaken regard; what have we not suffered in this way, in our physical, mental, and moral being—and at the hand of our best *friends!* This fact lessens greatly the value of all human friendship. So imperfect is human character, at best, that it is safe to rely but little upon our friends, however wise, or kind, or able to serve. Indeed, I doubt not, that we are in general, greater sufferers from the faults, omissions and imperfections of our friends than from the malice of our enemies. Alas! how many lives are sacrificed, and characters spoiled, and hopes blasted, and souls ruined, from the mere *imperfection and frailty of human kindness.*

It is a relief to turn from the weakness of man, to the power of God, from the failings and errors of the fallen creature, to the perfection and trascendant ability of our Immanuel. He has a perfect knowledge of all things and a perfect judgment, so that He cannot err in His estimate of our wants and the means of relief, nor in a single item in the whole series of his agencies and providential dispensations. He has a perfect comprehension of our being, in all its laws, and in the entire range of its experience. He knows every want of the creature, and the fullness of the Creator—the source of every evil and every remedy in the range of omniscience. For, as God, He made us, and gave laws to our being, and to the constitution of the universe, while, as man, He has experienced our infirmities, and has, therefore, a perfect knowledge of our case. He knows all our sins, secret and open, and the circumstances attending their commission. He knows all our secret sorrows which we bury in the depths of our hearts. He knows the weight of our cares—the intensity of our mental conflicts with doubt and fear, and error—and the darkness and misery we suffer in our souls, from the hidings of God's face, and the various trials and besettments of life. He knows full well the extent of our ruin as sinners—the utter perversity of our hearts; the heighth and depth of that wrath which we have provoked, and the all but infinite difficulty in the way of our redemption. He knows, too, the strength and full-

ness of God's love and grace, and the reality and greatness of the salvation which is offered to man in the Gospel. He knows, also, *when* to pity and when to censure, when to bless, and when to chastise—the time, place and manner of every office of friendship. Oh, what a friend must He be! Who, beside, could have made so kind and needful a provision for our spiritual nature, as His Gospel reveals? Who could have devised a wiser or better system of means than he is using to recover sinners to God? Who but the Incarnate One, could bind on Himself the burden of a sinner's guilt and doom, and travailing in the greatness of His strength, stay the descending arm of Almighty wrath, and pluck him from under the curse of the law, by giving an adequate ransom, and then renew him from sin into holiness, and pervade his dark and miserable being with the light, and peace, and joy of celestial life? Oh! who can plead for the penitent sinner like unto our conquering Jesus? Burdened with the service undertaken for us—"touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and knowing the sufficiency of His sufferings, what importunity of manner, and intensity of pity, and holy joy of benevolence, and efficacy of power, must characterise His intercessions at the mercy seat. Is not the *Christian* safe in such hands—with the arms of the sympathizing and mighty Jesus for his support? And will the sinner, whose guilt, is so enormous, and whose tremendous doom of judgment and despair is hastening on, spurn the only Saviour that can deliver him—the proffered service of the only Friend whose kindness is of any avail?

IV. To be qualified to sympathize fully with another in distress, *we must have undergone, in our own person, the same evils which he endures.* In the time of sickness, there is no friend whose sympathy and kind offices are so grateful, as are those of that particular one whose feelings have been mellowed by a like affliction; who is no stranger to a sick room and a bed of pain; whose voice is gentle, and step light, and look kind, and hand practised in the service. And in the day of affliction, when the heart bleeds, and the soul is in heaviness; or in the season of spiritual darkness, when faith is dim, and hope is weak, and the conflict severe, and the desponding soul treads on the verge of despair—how sweet and reviving are the fellowship and services of one who has trodden these paths of sorrow and darkness before us—who has gone to the grave to weep—been led forth into the wilderness to endure a season of fiery temptation, and been crushed to the earth, in the garden of agony, by the weight of his sins reckoned against him, and by the anger of God, kindled anew in the conscience, and speaking out, in every groan of wrestling nature! Oh, how the tried and anguished heart clings to such a friend, though he be but human! There is a community of feeling, a warmth and fullness of sympathy, which is as balm to the wounded spirit.

Jesus Christ has taken upon Him our actual sufferings. He has endured the very evils from which he came to deliver us. The human ill cannot be named which he did not experience, nor the scene of humiliation and deprivation, and trial, and agony, through which he did not pass in his earthly career. All that we have felt of the evil of sin, the guilt and misery of our condition, the justice of God in the punishment of transgression, the enmity of the world, the power of the devil, and the pains of death. He has felt. The measure of his privation was the measure of God's own fullness—the measure of His *endurance* the measure of our ill-desert and of God's wrath against sin. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich!" His baptism was one of suffering. From the "manger" that cradled Him, to the "tomb" in which His body was laid, poverty and neglect, and sorrow, and suffering, attended Him. Are you poor? What had he whose blessing had enriched the universe? "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Is your lot cast among the poor and obscure? He was "the carpenter's son," and wrought at an humble trade. Are you neglected and despised by the rich and great? He associates with the fishermen of Gallilee, and the spurned publicans and sinners of His nation. Are afflictions your lot? He was above all others "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Are you assailed by temptation? How was he tried! What a conflict He had in the wilderness, where alone and for forty days, He withstood the terrible onset of the prince of evil. And what language can convey an adequate conception of the conflict of the Garden, in the intensity of its suffering? "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." "O, my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." That was sorrow indeed—the hour and power of darkness. All our conflicts with the powers of darkness are nothing compared with the agony of that hour.

And yet he endured. He was without sin." No guile was found in him. He was "made perfect through sufferings." Clothed in human nature, and bearing its infirmities and sufferings. He passed through this world of sin, "holy harmless, and undefiled," and entered heaven with the spoils of a mighty victory, the Conqueror of sin, and death, and hell, the Head of a new kingdom, and the accepted and every way qualified, Intercessor of His people. The remembrance of Christ's sufferings, serves to sweeten the cup of our earthly sorrows—endears His grace and office-work to us—and encourages hope and confidence in Him as our Forerunner and Advocate.

V. FINALLY, he is a friend, indeed, *whose regard for us is*

equalled only by his ability to extend relief. Now Christ's sympathy is as effective as it is real, as strong as it is kind. He *can* succor the tempted—relieve the distressed — guide the erring—and defend the weak — supply the needy — restore the fallen — and save to the uttermost all who come to God by him. He has infinate resources of wisdom, power and grace, and can, therefore accomplish the full salvation of every believing soul, and consummate, in glory unending and perfect, the stupendous work of redeeming love. His is not the pity of *weakness*, unable to befriend us in our low estate, or afraid to breast the mighty tide of ruin which is sweeping an accursed race to hell, but the pity of *Omnipotence*, with its heart of courage and arm of strength. His are not the tears and pleadings of despair, wept over hopeless beings and poured upon the ear of unrelenting and unsatisfied Justice, but the tears of a wrought-out deliverance, shed over sinners already ransomed—tears of joy in the prospect of their salvation; the pleadings of infinite merit, of an accepted righteousness, before a Throne, appeased by the shedding of blood, disarmed of its thunders and made more attractive and glorious than ever by the spirit of forgiveness which it breathes towards sinners, for the sake of our great High Priest. The feelings of manhood and the resources of the God-head, equally belong to Christ. The one qualifies Him to sympathize with us and prompts to benevolent action for our relief, while the other bears Him out in the work and ensures the victory. O, what a friend and Saviour! What a heart has Jesus to feel, what an arm to deliver! In His active sympathy and love toward man as a lost creature of God, whom He came to seek and to restore, there are the elements of a blessed consolation, a divine strength, an overcoming faith. The ties which bind the penitent and believing sinner to the heart of Jesus and the throne of God, are not a vain thing. There is a voice heard from Calvary, louder than the cry of human guilt, louder even than the thunders of Divine wrath and sweeter and more majestic than the united harmony of heaven: it is the voice of Incarnate Mercy, groaning out its life for sinners, and pleading with God—by its own matchless worth and dignity—by its life of obedience and toil—by its bloody sweat and final agony, to stay the avenging hand, and spare the guilty, and save the lost.

With Jesus Christ for our advocate on high, our cause cannot fail. His own dignity and worth, and the value of His sacrifice, will give amazing weight to His intercessions. Under the power of His pleadings, Justice will sheathe the avenging sword. Presented by such a Mediator, and perfumed by a merit surpassing all creature imperfection and guilt, our poor services will find favor with God; and the Holy Spirit, the blessed Comforter, will descend and dwell in our hearts, and seal us into the day of redemption.

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THE REMISSION OF SIN.

"And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways;
To give knowledge of Salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins."—
LUKE 1: 76–77.

THUS Zecharias, filled with the Holy Ghost, addressed his son just born. The natural affections of the father give way to the more elevated sentiments of the "Man of God;" and the gratification derived from the birth of one, who should "comfort him concerning his work and the toil of his hands," is lost sight of amid visions of the honors and perils clustering around him, as "the Prophet of the Highest," and the Forerunner of the Lord.

John's early life was spent—not among the crowded population of the city—but in the deserts, where he waxed strong in spirit. His early habits were formed to self-denial and patient industry, the spirit of devotion ever stirring within him, and prompting to unwearied labors for the salvation of men, through the whole of his short public career. Official duty as "the prophet of the Highest," no less than his cherished disposition, directed him to "give the knowledge of salvation" to the people of God; or, in other words, to make them acquainted with the Saviour; to proclaim His long-expected advent, and prepare them to receive Him. This preparation consisted in breaking off their sins by righteousness, submitting to baptism in token of their repentance, and receiving his testimony of Jesus, as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. Nor without such preparation could the announcement of His coming give them peace and joy, as is clear from the fact, that to the Scribes and Pharisees, and even to the nation at large, it proved but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, over which they fell into perdition.

The blessings of the great salvation brought to man by Jesus Christ, are with propriety summed up in the single phrase of the text—"the remission of sins."

What is sin? Wherein consists its guilt? And how is it remitted? are important questions, suggested by the words before us.

I. What is sin?

By an Apostle it is defined to be, a "transgression of the law." A law is an authoritative rule of action, including both precept and penalty. The Law of God, that is, the moral law, binding alike all intelligent beings in heaven, earth, and hell, from everlasting to everlasting, is a code of holy precepts, to which just and adequate penalties are annexed; and the wilful violation of these precepts, is sin. The Saviour has comprehended the whole law in few words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." Short and simple as this command is, it embraces whatever of duty or obligation rests on man; and the transgression of any one of the particular duties or obligations involved in it, is sin.

The law of God as a rule of action, applies to man, in all his conditions, relations, and movements. It extends its authority over the heart, and all its affections; over the mind, and all its thoughts and determinations; over the body, and all its voluntary actings. It bears directly on the various relations we hold to God, to our fellow men, and to ourselves, as the creatures of a day, and as destined to immortality; and it indicates the duties resulting from these several relations, and binds us to the discharge of them, by solemn sanctions.

Sin is variously denominated, agreeably to its various aspects or relations. There is the "sin that dwelleth in us," the "very wickedness" of the heart, sometimes called *original* sin, or the corruption of our moral nature, which, however it may be philosophically defined, means nothing more nor less than the evil principle, which "works all manner of concupiscence," and is invariably developed by every human being knowing good from evil. And there is *actual* sin, manifested in the conversation of men, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind; serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. There are sins of *omission*, which consist in leaving things undone that ought to be done; and sins of *commission*, which consist in doing things that ought not to be done. *Secret* sins are those which God's eye only discovers; and *presumptuous* sins are those committed in face of the world, and in opposition to light and conviction of duty.

But the essential constituent of the abominable thing which God's soul hates, is its *voluntariness*. It is an act which violates

the changeless obligations of man to his Maker; and it matters not, whether that violation be open to the world, or concealed even from the eye of the sinner himself; whether it be committed only in the most hidden recess of the soul, or on the mountain top; it is enough that it be committed, and that God's eye sees it, and His law condemns it. If the heart is evil, all its movements, however unperceived by our imperfect vision, are evil also, and determine us to be children of disobedience and of wrath.

But—where are worldly anxieties, covetous desires, enkindled envy, pride, malice, or revenge? where are hard thoughts of God, rebellious heavings of the spirit against the purity of His character and the supremacy of His authority, repining under the adversities of His Providence, perversions of His revealed truth, or determined efforts to obstruct its course, and prevent its influence? There, sin holds dominion. And, where are evil surmisings, perverse disputings, and fierce contentions; where is truth violated, deceit indulged, hypocrisy maintained, error defended, vice encouraged, and wholesome civil law trodden under foot; where are vain amusements vindicated, idle imaginations cherished, men of profligacy honored, the profanation of God's name and sacred institutions connived at, the rights of the poor disregarded, the prayers of the humble derided, and the labors of the godly thwarted? There, sin holds dominion. All these, and many more, are violations of the great law of love, and seek not only the derangement, but tend to the overthrow of that perfect system of order, which Divine wisdom contrived in the beginning, and which, but for the apostacy in the garden of Eden, had rendered man in all his generations, as happy and glorious as are the angels about the throne.

This then is sin; a violation of the known and eternal law of God—a law, holy, just, and good, in all its requirements, and threatened inflictions on the transgressor.

II. Wherein consists the guilt of sin?

By guilt is meant *desert of punishment*, or, prior liability to suffering. When in a criminal court the Jury bring in the verdict —"Guilty," they simply affirm the accused to be deserving of the penalty of law—in other words, that he has incurred the obligation to suffer. And thus will all the world be brought in Guilty before God, in the last great day. The sinner will be placed before the tribunal. Witnesses from heaven, earth, and hell will be summoned. The evidence will be clear as heaven's light. An impartial verdict will be rendered. Declared "Guilty" before an assembled universe, his own conscience will approve the decision, and he will be speechless.

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while yet, under the consciousness of ill desert, they ascribe their salvation to the simple fact, that Jesus hath put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself. In the eye of the law they are still guilty, and will remain so forever. No lapse of time, nor elevation of character or condition will annihilate this fact.

Guilt, or the obligation to suffer, is proportioned to the magnitude of the offence, and not, as some argue, to the length of time employed in its commission. It may require a longer time to perpetrate a fraud on property, than to take away a man's life; or, to execute a plan of slight mischief, than an act of deep bloody villany. But the guilt of an offence is always estimated, even among men, by the nature and extent of the obligations violated; and the obligations to respect a man's life are as much greater than the obligations to respect his property, as his life is of greater value than his property. Hence, murder, the greatest of human offences, involves, in the light of nature as well as of Revelation, the desert of capital punishment, while theft and a thousand petty frauds, involve only the just punishment of fine, imprisonment, or stripes.

It will not be questioned, that God is an infinite Being; nor, that His law is the transcript of His nature, as well as the rule of His administration. Nor can it more be questioned, that the obligation to observe and honor His law, is coëxtensive with His Being, and as sacred as are the rights and happiness of all intelligences under His government; it is as much greater than the obligation to respect the rights and happiness of our fellow men, as God himself is greater than man; it is infinite. But every sin against God violates this obligation, as clearly and directly, as violence against the property or blood of man, violates the obligations imposed by civil law, to respect the rights of our fellow men, to their property and lives.

Look at the same matter in another light. The evil of sin is proportioned to its actual influences and legitimate tendencies combined, or the system of universal order. How bitter and disastrous are its actual effects, I need not say; and, no one conversant with the history of a world often deluged in blood, and always agitated by evil passions, filled with tears and groans, subjected to pestilence and famine, to fear and anguish in all departments of animal life, need be told; nor will any one who reflects on his own sorrows, and those of the limited circle in which he moves—on the frequent disquietudes and alarms, disappointments and mortifications felt by himself and his intimate friends, require instruction as to the poison-breathing influence of sin upon all that is precious in human enjoyment. Still, to all these evil influences of sin on present happiness, bounds are fixed by the decree of Jehovah, and His arm is stretched forth to arrest and turn back the swelling tide of human calamity. "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no far-

ther; here shall thy pride be stayed." Its tendencies, however, are not thus changed. Restraint curbs them, but destroys them not. To God alone are they fully known. No finite mind, though large as Gabriel's, can comprehend them. But it is safe to say, that were sin uncontrolled in its progress, it would stop at nothing short of a depopulated heaven, a ravaged universe, a wide-spread conflagration of all the material works of God, and of the very throne on which He sits. Such are its inevitable tendencies, in all the forms, degrees, and circumstances of its existence. Love alone, armed with omnipotence, prevents such results, and rears the barrier which the eternal foe of God and man can not overleap.

Nor is the guilt, or ill-desert of sin, at all dependent on the threatenings of God against it. Had no threatening been issued, while yet God had revealed himself as a holy and almighty Sovereign, and the friend of universal order, the same essential obligations to holiness had rested on man, as now. The revelation of His purposes, whether of mercy or of wrath, makes no difference as to the desert of the sinner. God, as his Maker, has a perfect right to his obedience, even though He promise no reward to it, and threaten no punishment to disobedience. He has, indeed, been pleased to declare, that He will punish the persevering transgressor with everlasting destruction from His presence; and although this, like every other discovery of the Divine purposes, may illustrate and enhance the obligations of men to obedience, they do not create those obligations; and independently of all such disclosures of the Eternal mind, men are bound to obey perfectly, the whole revealed will of God. I repeat it, then, the threatenings of God against sin, form the clearest proofs of His benignity and love; they are startling testimonies of His infinite benevolence; they are gracious declarations of His compassionate honor for the welfare of those who hate Him; and as such, they ought to be believed and honored, instead of meeting the unbelief and contempt of the rebellious heart.

Oh! how vast are the obligations of men to love and obey Jehovah. Resulting as they do, from the changeless relations of the creature to the Creator, and of the subject to his rightful Sovereign; enhanced as they are, by every development of the Divine character, and by every promise and threatening designed to illustrate the principles of the Divine administration and enforce obedience, man is bound to acknowledge them cordially and unreservedly—to admit that every violation of them, involves the desert of punishment, and that wrath even to the uttermost, may justly be poured out on every transgressor.

III. How is sin remitted?

It is plain that the fact of its commission can no more be de-

stroyed, than any other fact in the history of God's Providence. Remission is not annihilation. And the phrase, "remission of sins," whenever employed, imports simply, the cancelling of the guilt of sin, and the removal of its legitimate consequences; or, the bestowment of pardon, on such grounds as at once secure the honor of God, and save His government from just reproach.

The remission of sins, or their forgiveness, is the prerogative of God alone. The keys of death and of hell, are with Him. He openeth and no man shutteth, He shutteth and no man openeth. The interpretation of any Scripture to the contrary, is perversion. Hence, when Christ asserted the power of forgiving sins, the Jews at once understood Him to assert His Godhead, and exclaimed, "who can forgive sins but God only?" as when the child offends the parent, the parent only can forgive him; and, as when the citizen violates the law of the land, the supreme authority of the land, only, can remit his punishment; so when man offends against God, and is constrained to cry with David, "against thee, and thee only have I sinned," God alone can grant forgiveness.

But without this forgiveness, there is no salvation. Salvation is based on reconciliation to God. There can be no reconciliation to God, while a debt of ten thousand talents remains due to Divine justice, no more than there can be a reconciliation of the convicted criminal to a human government, while his guilt remains uncancelled. Pardon must be granted him before he can return to his allegiance, and render an acceptable obedience to the laws. Then, he is secured from the sentence of the law, and placed in his former relations to the government and his fellow citizens. So it is with him who sins against God; he is first forgiven; then reconciled, purified, and saved with an everlasting salvation.

But this reconciliation can not take place without the intervention of a Mediator. The honor and stability of the Divine government allow the sacrifice of no principle lying at its foundation; and if its fundamental principles are to be maintained, it must be at the cost of some sacrifice to violated justice; and that sacrifice must be such an one as will clearly show, that while the Lord delights in mercy, "he will by no means acquit the guilty." Man has no such sacrifice to offer. "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall we give our first-born for our transgression—the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul?" God will not allow the sinner to escape the difficulties in which he has involved himself, with impunity. The dispositions of His heart forbid it. His truth forbids it. The security of all holy intelligences forbids it. And the whole scheme of the Gospel evinces it to be His first and great concern, to vindicate His holiness and truth—to maintain inviolate the original principles of His government, and even in the method proposed for the sinner's pardon, to give the clearest possible exhibi-

tion of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the fixedness of His purpose, that not one jot or tittle of His law shall fail.

Hence, the disclosure of that primary principle of the Gospel, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission;" a principle well understood by the faithful, even throughout the Patriarchal and Levitical dispensations. "Then," says the apostle, "almost all things were purged with blood;" and the sacrifice of calves and goats, though it could not of itself take away guilt, was yet a lively type of the great sacrifice of the cross, by which sin is expiated and forgiven. Christ is "able to save unto the uttermost, those that come unto God by him;" because "he is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" because He is "Emanuel, God with us," combining the divine with the human nature; and because, not needing "first to offer sacrifices for himself," all the virtue of His sacrifice belongs to the people. The infinite dignity of His character, His spotless purity and boundless compassion, combine to fit Him perfectly for the mediatorial office. "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." "He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." "He was made sin," or a sin-offering, "for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Such are a few of the numerous testimonies of the Holy Spirit to the fact, that there is no salvation for the sinner, except through the sufferings of another, in his stead. God can not exercise pardoning mercy without an atonement. His own glory does not permit Him to save the sinner, except as the broken law is first magnified by the shedding of innocent blood. But the shedding of this blood, so far from annihilating sin itself, simply opens the way for God to remit the punishment due to it, with safety to His government, and to deliver the sinner from its further power and fatal consequences. And, unless the sinner be delivered from the plague of his own heart, and the corruptions of this present world, and made a partaker of the holiness of God through faith in the Son of His love, he has no share in the blessedness of the pardoned sinner.

The whole revelation of the Gospel may be summed up in few words. Man is a sinner. The law of God condemns him. He has no power to annul that law, nor evade its execution. Christ interposes, not to break down the law, but to magnify it by yielding himself to its curse; he offers himself, a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savor. This sacrifice is accepted of heaven. This remission of sins is proclaimed in the ears of the whole world, and pledged to every individual accepting the overture. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

Does the question arise—"Why then are not all men saved?"

The answer is obvious: they do not *accept* the proffered "remission of sins." And, if it be further asked, "How know we that any do not accept this remission?" I answer: We know it, because many do not repent of sin, and receive Christ, or, obey the Gospel. These are the divinely appointed tests of acceptance; and the most charitable application of these tests to multitudes of mankind, shows clearly that they do not wish the proffered remission, and of course have no interest in the great salvation.

The plan of mercy proposed in the Gospel is broad, strong, and glorious; broad enough to reach, and strong enough to sustain, the entire population of the world, from Adam downward to his latest born son; and glorious enough to fill the Eternal mind with delight, and call forth shouts of loftiest praise from the myriads of heaven, while eternity endures. And the difficulty in the way of the salvation of man lies, not at all in the plan of mercy, but wholly in the sinner's aversion to the plan. Let him cordially consent to the law as holy, just, and good, abhorring himself, and repenting in dust and ashes; and let him yield his heart to God, and cherish the meek and self-denying spirit of Christ, and his guilt shall be remitted—he shall be saved. But let him ask for salvation, while he indulges the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and he asks for what he knows nothing of, and for that which God can not bestow, more than he can repent or lie. The salvation of the Gospel is nothing more nor less than deliverance from the love, the power, and practice of sin; and of deliverance from the pains of eternal death. While under the dominion of the god of this world, it knows nothing. Hence it is, that the revealed plan of salvation, while it fills every pure mind in heaven and earth with rapture, has no glory in the sinner's eye, and brings no joy home to his heart; he turns away from it with disgust—pronounces it unworthy of God, and frames another and better plan in his vain imaginings, on which he reposes in quietness, till God says, "this night shall thy soul be required of thee."

What if the sinner *complain?* It is without reason. He has nothing to lay to the charge of God, for He is long suffering; nor has he any thing to lay to the charge of the law, for the law is holy, just, and good; nor has he any thing to lay to the charge of the Gospel, for the Gospel is full of grace and truth. Aside of himself, there is nothing in the universe of which he has reason to complain. He is his own worst enemy. If he tread under foot his own mercies, and obstinately reject life and salvation, and urge his way to perdition against all the remonstrances of God and conscience, under the promptings of a heart of unbelief, he but destroys himself. Even Satan can have no power over him beyond his own consent, for *he* is no sooner resisted than he flies; and the seductions of evil men are harmless as the flickering light of the

glow-worm, apart from his own evil inclinations. All his difficulties lie within. He *will* not come to Christ that he may have life. He *will* not sell all that he has and give to the poor—hold his farm and his merchandise, his pleasures and his honors, in subordination to the treasures of heaven, and come and follow Christ. This is his destruction—brought down upon his head, by his own folly and perverseness. Let him put away the evil of his doings, repent of his past transgressions, and fall at the feet of the Lamb, slain from before the foundation of the world, and he is at once absolved from all the claims of Divine justice to his blood. But so long as he continues in sin, he is exposed to endless wrath. The sentence of condemnation is already upon him, and through the forbearance of God only, is its execution delayed. He has no plea to urge in arrest of judgment. To the promises of God he has no claim, for they are given only to the broken-hearted and believing. And he has no advocate to appear in his behalf at the right hand of God; and at the last tribunal he must stand naked and alone, trembling and unbefriended, to hear the final doom: "Depart thou cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn the source of all true consolation in this vale of tears.

There are two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, viz.: His promise and His oath, sealed by the blood of the Great Forerunner, who hath entered into that within the veil, securing strong consolation to all who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them; and it is a consolation which the world can neither give nor take away. They are made accepted in the Beloved, and are freed from the law of sin and death. Their iniquities are forgiven, their sins are covered, and they rejoice in hope of the glory of God. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" "In all things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." And this consolation abounds, in proportion to the simplicity and strength of faith—the uniformity and entireness of obedience—the fervor of the soul's aspirings after God, and the cordiality of acquiescence in the Divine purpose to maintain the claims of His law, and the majesty of His government unimpaired, at any expense to offenders. Indulging hope, sustained by evidence such as this, the Christian can fearlessly breast all the storms of life, hold at bay every enemy of his peace, and triumphantly exclaim, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any

other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

2. We learn the vastness of the believer's obligations to Christ. "Ye are bought with a price," saith the apostle; a price more precious than the gold of Ophir, and all earth's treasures. It was the blood of the incarnate God, and freely paid. Infinite condescension marked the act. It procured a suspension of the law's immediate demands on the transgressor—a space for repentance—the gift of the Holy Spirit, to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and the reversion of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. And who can comprehend the extent of such obligations? Immeasurable are they, as the heights of heaven and the depths of hell! But for this love of Jesus, no light had fallen on the darkness of the grave, no hope had cheered the gloominess of man's pathway thither; no joy in his prospective triumphs over hell had arisen in his heart, and no crown had awaited him at God's right hand! O! for more than an angel's tongue to celebrate his praise!

3. We learn the fearful infatuation of those who turn away from Christ and look elsewhere for support and consolation. All beside is vanity and vexation of spirit. All else, is disappointment and sorrow, trouble and anguish. What though they persuade themselves that they are not the vilest of the vile, and even that their virtues are many? Still, the law of God condemns them, declaring "every one cursed who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." And what though they persuade themselves that God is too merciful to punish His enemies and avenge himself of their transgressions: it is still true, that vengeance is His, and he will repay fury to his adversaries, banishing them into everlasting destruction from His presence, and the glory of His power. And what, though they flatter themselves with peace and safety, because the bounties of heaven are so richly lavished on them that they have not where to bestow their goods? It is still true, that like Dives, they may hereafter lift up their eyes, being in torment, and vainly implore a drop of water to cool their tongue tormented in the flame. And what though at present they have no corroding of conscience, nor distressing fears of death and future judgment? still, their condition is fearful; for they are not the first who have been given over of God to strong delusions, to believe lies, and who have no bands in their death, and are yet doomed to feel the gnawing of the worm that never dies, and the intenseness of the fire that is never quenched. The word of the Lord standeth for ever. "Evil pursueth sinners."

Christ is all in all. His love is wonderful. His riches are unsearchable. To Him alone man turns his eye with safety. "Be it known to you," my fellow sinners, "that through this man is

preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;" and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses; and, if ye despise Him, remember there is salvation in no other; "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, which shall devour the adversaries." "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets, Behold! ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." Turn away from the opening heavens, whence cometh the voice, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him;" pour practical contempt on the bloody scene of Calvary, whence issues the prayer, "Father! forgive them, they know not what they do;" and thus "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby any are sealed unto the day of redemption;" and the door of salvation is shut against you, your doom is sealed, to the world where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for ever! And, must it be so! Will you fling salvation from your arms, embrace the world and death, and plunge into hell, in despite of all that Infinite Love can do? O! forbear—look to heaven—listen to the pleadings of the Cross—throw yourselves down at the feet of Jesus, and LIVE FOR EVER.

SERMON CCCCLXXV.

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RELIGION THE TRUE ELEMENT OF REFORMATION.

"There is one Lawgiver."—JAMES 4 : 12.

"In the name of our God will we set up our Banners."—PSALMS 20 : 5.

THE present is an age of extraordinary activity and progress in the arts and sciences. The facility of communication with distant places is amazingly increased—intelligence is diffused with lightning swiftness, and no small part of the hard labor of human life is dispensed with, through the application of mechanical power. It is no less an age of active and enlarged philanthropy. The evils of man's social state are more clearly seen and, perhaps, deeply felt, than they were by those who have gone before us, and a general and powerful movement is made to reform, improve, and elevate society. All classes are professedly engaged in this great and good work—all classes, under whatever banner enlisted, are

professedly fighting the battle of humanity, reform, freedom, social happiness; and if war is waged and territory acquired; if China and Mexico are trampled in the dust, and the thrones and dynasties of Kings are overthrown, it is all declared to be for the ultimate benefit of mankind. And yet there exists in the great army of reformers such a diversity of character, object, and mode, that it is impossible to regard them as *one*, or anticipate anything like concert of action or unity of result. Some go forth entirely in their own wisdom and strength, inscribing on their banners, humanity, reason, liberty, love, universal brotherhood; others feeling their weakness, ignorance, and utter insufficiency, and their need of light and strength from above, exclaim, "THERE IS ONE LAW-GIVER," "IN THE NAME OF OUR GOD WE WILL SET UP OUR BANNERS." With such, the religious element is the soul of philanthropy; their main dependence is on it; and sooner than refuse to honor and magnify it in the prosecution of this blessed work, they will let their right hand forget her cunning, and their tongue cleave to the roof of their mouth.

Of the correctness and superiority of their position, we might feel assured from the simple consideration, if we had no other, that, until the coming of Jesus Christ, the world knew not what philanthropy was. With all his noble endowments, which elevate him above the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, man, untaught of God, never feels for others' woes and never mourns over human vices. If pity and compassion form any part of his constitution, they lie buried under a mound of selfishness and brutality; and hence, even the virtuous heathen could throw their living, but unneeded offspring, into pits and graves, and carry out their aged and infirm to the river's brink, to be devoured by the jackal and the crocodile. And hence, also, in the heathen world, was never known an almshouse, a hospital, or an asylum for the suffering. And hence, too, no work of moral reform, within our knowledge, was ever undertaken, where the Gospel was not preached. To the religious element then, history says we must look as the basis of true philanthropy; and if philanthropy now pleads, in this day of light, for an independent basis, it is in robbery of its parent, its fountain, its divine original.

But that religion lies at the base of all true philanthropy and moral improvement, and that in every work of reformation and well-doing, "in the name of our God" we should set up our banners, may be made more distinctly to appear from several considerations.

I. All true philanthropy and moral reform lie eternally in the bosom of God. GOD IS LOVE. And while for near six thousand years sin has reigned, and our world, which came beautiful from the hand of its Creator, has been filled with wailing and lamentation, His infinite heart has followed it in all its wanderings and

paths of guilt and sorrow, and, with sacrifices, before unknown to principalities and powers in heavenly places, He has sought to reclaim and save it. Of the means He has used to effect this great object, we need not now speak. They are all concentrated in the gift of His Son.

> "The ransom was paid down; the fund of heaven;
> Heaven's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,
> Amazing and amazed, poured forth the price,
> All price beyond."

And a multitude whom no man can number, redeemed out of every nation and tongue, already stand washed, sanctified and glorified before the throne. This is God's great work; not to create, but to reform and save; to destroy sin; to relieve wretchedness, and to bring a world, lost, condemned for ever, back to its original purity and glory. And is there another work of love and moral renovation like it and not of it? It is base coin; vile pretension. To undertake to do good without God, independent of God, unmindful of God; to say, who is the Lord that we should recognise Him in our labor of love! what is it? It is not merely Atheism; it is worse—it is to despise God; to reject God from His own enterprise; it is to place ourselves in His place, and raise a trophy to the creature which belongs only to the Creator.

II. God is the Lawgiver, and in Him alone do we find the true principles of reform.

If men go out to battle, they desire to go under the direction of one who will teach their "hands to war" and their "fingers to fight." To enlist under the guidance of one totally unacquainted with the military art and whatever would insure success; of one, especially, who would plunge them into a thousand difficulties and dangers, would be folly and madness. But who has the requisite wisdom to reform this world? Who knows how to meet the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience," and foil him in all his attempts to ruin man? Who is able to explore the depths of human depravity, and to reach the devices of man's heart, and turn him from his wickedness, and bring him back to the love and service of his Creator? Where shall we go for the *law* of reform? To heathen philosophy? To the blood and sensuality of Mohammed? To the cold-hearted speculations of Hume and Bolingbroke? To the old principles of French brotherhood, pronouncing death an eternal sleep? To socialism, disrupting all the ties which God and nature have constituted? To the very highest wisdom of man, amid all the lights of civilization and Christianity, while yet unsanctified, and controlled by the heart of wickedness? We know of nothing we can trust; of none in whom we may confide, but HIM who

made the heart and knows all its treachery. "Out of Zion goes forth the law." After thousands of years of trial of all that human wisdom and philosophy could accomplish, the great Apostle of the Gentiles exclaimed, *Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the wisdom of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* "There is one Lawgiver, that is God." He only knows what law is good; He only has authority to dispense it; He only can impose binding sanctions.

III. In God alone is our strength.

All social evils, as war, intemperance, licentiousness, have their deep foundations in the desperate wickedness of the human heart. They are not like the natural ills of life, which result from a violation of the law of man's physical nature, and which may be remedied by a due submission to those laws, with or without regard to the divine Lawgiver; but they are the outbreaks of human passion which will not be controlled; which neither argument, nor entreaty, nor authority, nor regard to the highest personal good, for time or eternity, can curb or check. Were the heart as it should be, true in its allegiance and holy in all its impulses and affections, obedience to God would be, not merely the ruling principle, but passion of the soul. In heaven the angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, need no compulsory power to secure obedience. All, all are swift in executing the divine pleasure. But not so on earth. Here are treason, rebellion, stubbornness, infidelity, blasphemy. Here, range all the furies of the pit, and in war, intemperance, and lust, they find their element. Attempts to subdue and root them out by human skill, by weapons drawn from human armories; through appeals to the dignity of human nature, and the desirable perfection of human society, always have proved and always will prove unavailing. As there is one Lawgiver, one Counsellor, so there is One to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth, and in whose strength and that alone, the outer and inner man can be thoroughly revolutionized. "I, if I be lifted up," said the divine Saviour, "will draw all men unto me." When the Apostles went forth proclaiming the love of Christ, they carried with them not only a free salvation, but a power to break the chains of the captive, and to root out the dominion of the Devil. The world were astounded, as they saw men not merely put off their ancestral religion, forsaking and destroying their idols, but change all their habits and renounce their sins; the fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, becoming holy men and holy women; no longer running to the same excess of riot with others, but from an inward principle, dead to the world, mortifying their members upon the earth, putting on as the elect of God, holy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suf-

fering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, living to God and living for heaven; and sooner than go back to their sins going to the stake and expiring exultingly in the flame. And that same power, the power of the cross, continues. In India, it can break down caste. In Africa, root out the slave trade. In the Isles of the sea, change the cannibal into a being mild and gentle as a lamb. In the dark forest, convert the savage warrior and make him the peaceful husbandman, singing praises to his Creator. In the land of light and science and civilization, where man lifts his proud front against the Almighty—humble the blasphemer, reform the drunkard, prostrate the infidel, break the chain of the slave, make man ashamed of war and brutal triumph, open the hand of the miser to the most bountiful liberality, and fill every heart with gratitude and love. Going in the strength of the Gospel, there is nothing too great or difficult for us to accomplish.

IV. The religious element alone, furnishes an irresistible and permanent motive for action, while it is the only one which will insure perseverance in those reclaimed from vice.

On the Atheist's supposition, that there is no God and no hereafter, no responsibility to a higher power for what we are and what we do, and that man's acts and character reach not beyond the grave, of what consequence is it to us, except as the peace and order of society are concerned, whether men are virtuous or vicious, sober or drunken, saved or lost? and, of what consequence to us to what standard our own actions conform, so long as they gratify our appetites and passions? Unless men have faith in God and faith in what He has revealed as the Lawgiver and Judge of the world, the only helper and Saviour of sinners, they will slumber in profound indifference; let the heathen world perish in ignorance, and the whole human race lie under the wrath and curse of God. And if they can escape the penalty of its violation, they care for no law, physical or moral, human or divine. It is only when the heart is filled with love to God that it breathes love to man; only when it desires and seeks the glory of God, that it abhors itself as vile and detests vice in every form; only when it burns with a spirit of holy philanthropy, that it would extend to every soul on earth, salvation in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

The religious element was the main spring in the philanthropy of Howard, who reformed the prisons and dungeons of Europe for the outward comfort of their miserable tenants; of a Clarkson and Wilberforce, who would root out the slave trade, that inhuman bondage might terminate for ever; how much more is it of necessity the element in which the man must move who would reform either individuals or society of vice and wickedness. And let men be reclaimed from no higher principles than mere worldly well being, momentary comfort, pecuniary gain, respectability in

society (and we acknowledge they may be), yet what can bind them against the strong force of appetite and passion? What cares the reformed inebriate when the tiger appetite rises afresh, and the avaricious vender says, "drink and be happy, you can take care of yourself;" what cares he for worldly well-being or pecuniary gain, or reputation, or family ties, for life or death, heaven or hell? Nothing at all. If he has not the fear and love of God implanted soon in his heart; if he remains a stranger to true repentance for all his sin; if he has no faith in the blood of atonement for forgiveness; if all the goodness of God to him in rescuing him from the drunkard's hell, does not lead him to serve a better master, who will sustain him in the hour of conflict, little is his chance that he will not go back "like the dog to his vomit, and like the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." It is worse than idle, therefore, it is vain and presumptuous, to think a moment of prosecuting any moral reform without religion. Without religion and religious principle, no moral enterprise ever did or can flourish. The repeated failures in the attempt, while the heart is in the midst of congratulation, should make the most bitter enemies of godliness, ashamed of their efforts.

V. The glory of every moral reform and philanthropic enterprise belongs to God. For, it is "of Him, and through Him, and to Him." But what glory has He in a mere worldly benefaction, commenced and carried on without Him, and perhaps, in despite of all His teachings. The attempts of many of the philanthropists and socialists of modern days to do good, remind us of the magicians of Egypt, who, when they saw the wonders which the Lord did, went and did likewise with their enchantments. Not only the morals of men have been reformed, but the new heart, in pretence, has been created, and instead of the song, "Not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory," man has appropriated to himself the praise of both moral and spiritual renovation. O, it is sweet to think that God will have the glory that is His due, when all "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Then, when the whole work of redeeming this world from sin and sorrow shall be complete, and one universal reign of peace and joy shall be established, then it will be seen and felt, that every victory over sin has been gained of God; that He and He alone, has checked the proud dominion of iniquity; that every chain has been broken by His power; every renewed soul changed by His Spirit, and every saved immortal carried forward by His strength, through faith, unto salvation.

In view of our subject, we see,

1. Why and how, it is that a multitude of schemes for the moral reformation and improvement of the world, have proved abortive.

They have had no solid basis; no authority; no power, even if for a moment they have touched the heart, to bind the conscience. They have sprung, perhaps, from feelings in some sense honorable to our nature. The tide of wickedness and woe, which has rolled over our race, has in every age extorted the cry, cannot something be done to make man better, more wise, more virtuous; to break chains which bind him; customs which debase him; and to restore him to the nobleness and dignity for which he was created? The effort has been put forth in schemes of the most glowing and promising philanthropy, but overlooking the great truth that man's moral nature is corrupt at the core, that his misery proceeds not from natural causes in man's power to heal, but from a fountain of wickedness within, ever full and raging, and which can be restrained and dried up or purified only by divine power, the power of the Cross. Overlooking, or disbelieving this, philanthropists have toiled and labored, advanced and receded, like the ever restless waves of the ocean, leaving scarce the impress of their footsteps behind them. The stern moralist, demanding what the world, without God, would call perfection, has often had the sad mortification of finding all his efforts at reform, fruitless. "For twelve years," said the great Chalmers, the twelve years in which he preached, without an experimental acquaintance with the Gospel of Christ, "for twelve years I expatiated on the meanness of dishonesty, on the villany of falsehood, on the despicable arts of calumny; in a word, against all those deformities of character which awake the natural indignation against the pests and disturbers of society. But during the whole of that period in which I made no attempt against the natural enmity of the human mind to God, while I was inattentive to the way in which it was dissolved, while Christ was scarcely ever spoken of, though I certainly did press the reformation of honor and truth and integrity among my people, I never heard of any such reformation being effected among them. If there was ever any thing at all brought about in this way, it was more than I ever got an account of. I am not sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and proprieties of social life, had the weight of a feather on the moral habits of my parishioners." Such as would make the world wiser and better, without God the Saviour, are blind leaders of the blind; "both will fall into the ditch."

2. We see why and how the Church is God's great reforming power in the world. So she is spoken of by God himself. "Ye are the salt of the earth, the light of the world." "Out of Zion goes forth the law. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." "The Lord is great in Zion, and He is high above all people." "And of Zion, it shall be said, This and that man was born in her, and the highest Himself shall establish her." The

Church is God's living law; His visible truth, His living, walking, attractive example; His spiritual host; the vital power and life-giving spirit, which sets in motion every effective attempt to bring back this world to God. It may be corrupt, as it often has been; and when it is not, it may fail to do its duty. We speak of it as God has established it. It is, then, the great centre of moral influence. And, believing in God, trusting in God, and breathing ont the spirit of Him who came to reform and save it—the church can overturn mountains of difficulty; subdue kingdoms of wickedness, and speedily bring on the reign of the Prince of Peace. No evil is so great, be it war, or slavery, or drunkenness, that it cannot entirely éradicate it, when its full and united action is enlisted against it. And as no enterprise of philanthropy or work of reform, can well succeed without the co-operation of the Christian church, so none can well succeed against the church. Let the church set herself against any scheme of benevolence, withhold the sanction of her authority, and oppose it as at variance with the word and Spirit of God: let her by doctrinal teaching and ecclesiastical action, uphold war, or slavery, or intemperance, and hard, if not impossible, will it be, to strike down and root out these enormous evils.

3. We learn again, where, and where alone, lies our hope of the permanency and success of any great moral reformation. It lies in the religious element. If it has not this element, it will die. It is atheistic, and God will blow upon it. It is without sanction, and does not bind the conscience. It seeks no blessing from on high, and therefore, none will be imparted; it will pine away and perish.

It was in the action of the church, in other words, with religious men, acting on religious principle, having the religious and moral interests of men in view rather than their temporal thrift and prosperity, that the temperance reformation was commenced and carried forward. Our Beechers, Chapins, Hewitts, Edwardses, with their compeers, leaders of the sacramental host of God's elect, were the men who laid its foundations. Philanthropy and patriotism soon came to their help, and pressed it gloriously onward, each finding in its results, a rich compensation; but in the religious element, lay its strength. It was the child of prayer, the offspring of love. In its defense, the pulpit spoke out its thunders; in converting men to its principles, it used its kind, inviting voice; and, to impart strength and perseverance, with few exceptions, every ecclesiastical body in the land, gave it commendation and bade it God speed. This is a matter of history; none the less true, because unknown to some, forgotten by others, and denied by many. The record is on high, and will be owned of Him who suffers not a cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple, to

lose its reward. And here, is all our hope of its continuance and success.

We can, indeed, conceive of such a work, once commenced, being carried forward for a season, by the mere force of philanthropy and patriotism. Many a heart destitute of all religion, has deeply felt the evils of Intemperance, as it has the evils of cholera, or the ravages of war; and when looking at the miserable inebriate, poor, degraded, the prey of tormenting thirst, and dying on his bed of straw of delirium tremens, or when wandering through almshouses and prisons, it has there seen the miserable victims of the cup, reduced to beggary or excited to crime, torn away from all the joys of home, drinking deep of sorrow and inflicting upon the community unendurable evils, it has exclaimed, O blessed reformation! roll onward thy wheels of mercy and speedily accomplish thy work.

The Washingtonian movement, was an outbreak of philanthropy, of pity for the miserable, compassion for the fallen, kindness for the destitute and abandoned, such, perhaps, as the world never saw. Nor, was it unmingled with true religion. Men, there were, most laborious in it from the highest principles of love to God and love to men, and, whose memory will be fragrant, while earth shall endure; but others there were, who officiously mounted as charioteers, separating it from the church and all religion, elevating it as even more efficacious for good to man, and giving it a character and position which forced out the co-operation of the Christian church, leaving it where it soon dwindled and perished. Socialism has now come to the support of the cause; secret organizations, sustained by that most popular of all operations, mutual assistance in the day of want. But if the religious element is wanting, even this well compacted system, through the depraved principles ever active in the human breast, will burst asunder, or be perverted to something which will take far stronger hold of its enrolled thousands, than the simple and self-denying work of moral reformation. God's Spirit alone, can give long life and health to any scheme of philanthropy, and God's power alone, can secure a full triumph over the depravity of earth. Hence, we say,

4. That on the church as wielding the religious element; the church, God's great reforming power in the earth, the temperance reformation has an undeniable claim for its life and success. Should it be abandoned by the church and the ministry (and in some places it has been), and find no refuge but under the banner of socialism and philanthropy, and be sustained only by human sanctions and man's devisings, it would soon expire. The church might complain that it had fallen into other hands, but on none could she cast the blame, but herself. She had no right to yield it to other hands.

God had called her in his providence to nourish, and protect, and carry it forward until it had done all its blessed work in the earth. She might plead that she did nothing. That would be her condemnation, bound as she is to do everything in her power. She might think lightly of her act, but blood would be in her skirts. All the blood that would flow from the thousands and tens of thousands rushing to the drunkard's grave; yea, her own blood. In leaving the temperance cause to perish, the church would be guilty of a suicidal act. Doing nothing to stay the ravages of the demon, is, in truth, inviting it to feed on our own vitals. Amid the most active and well-devised aggressive movements, the church can never expect an entire escape. Some minister may fall at the altar; some communicant bring disgrace upon his profession; some child, dedicated in faith and prayer, be seduced away to fill a drunkard's grave. Let intemperance prevail, and what will become of the Sabbath? what of the house and worship of God? what hope will there be of the conversion of sinners? what, of pure and effective revivals? what, of the conversion of the Heathen, and subjection of the world to the dominion of Christ? To each and all, intemperance is most directly antagonistical. On the subject of missions, hear Archdeacon Jeffreys, of Bombay, "I am persuaded," says this venerable man, "from many years of past experience, that God will not bless the cause of missions on this side of India, with any extensive success, till the missionaries of the Cross take up the thorough temperance principle. On receiving the converted Hindoos into the Christian church, if the Missionary does not exhort them to continue in the same pure (abstinence) principles, in which they have been educated from their youth, and set the same example in his own person; if he once loosens the cord or puts the stumbling-block before their weak conscience, by even the sight of intoxicating liquor upon his own table, a flood of Intemperance, with all its crimes, will come in upon the infant church and spread over India, and all our missionary efforts will end in the whole, a curse and not a blessing to the country." To herself, therefore, as well as to this cause of philanthropy, to the world, and to God, is the church answerable for the course she takes. She must sustain it in the way in which she alone can do it, by infusing into it the religious element, and making it, in her own body at least, a religious as well as moral and philanthropic work. We do not say, that she must require the temperance community to conduct all their concerns religiously, and thus make them forbidding to men of the world. We do not aver, that every thing shall be done according to the strict letter of the word of God, or the strictest rules of sect. It is not for her to require, but to give; give at all times and under all circumstances, her full and cordial co-operation. Private and public sympathy, individual, family, Christian, and ministerial influence, should all be in favor of tem-

perance. Opposition, prompt and decided, should be shown to every thing that favors Intemperance. We would have every church in Christendom, known as a temperance organization; every minister of Christ lift up his voice with the same boldness on temperance, that he does on righteousness and judgment to come; every missionary of the Cross, lay it among the foundation stones of each church, planted in Heathen lands; everywhere and at all times, should the whole Christian world stand forth, bold and decided; antagonistical to this foul work of Satan, which for thousands of years, has been doing its work of death. Church temperance organizations would secure universal organization, for, where is the place in Christendom, that is without a church?—perpetuity to the cause, for while all other associations are transient, the church remains; —a good foundation, for, amalgamated with the church, its basis would be the Bible;—the blessing of God, for He loves His church and will take care of it to the end.

Come up, then, churches of the living God; come up, O Ministers of Christ, to the help of this mighty enterprise. If there ever was a day for ministerial boldness, it is the day in which we live; if there ever was a cause in which it was demanded of every Christian, to stand forth, firm and uncompromising, it is the cause which will banish drunkenness with all its curses, from earth, and leave man free in his intellect, free in his body, and free in all the appetites and passions of his nature to serve the living God.

LASTLY, We say to the friends of temperance, throughout the nation and the world, as did the Prophet to his beloved country, "O JERUSALEM, BE THOU INSTRUCTED."

The work you have undertaken and in part accomplished, is great and momentous beyond human conception. But "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Greater folly can be imputed to no man, than to think of checking, curbing, and suppressing the outbreaks of inward, ever restless and desperate depravity, by mere human philosophy, socialism, organization, sympathy, brotherhood, moral suasion, or legal action. Useful each may be in its place, but Leviathan is not so tamed. He will laugh at the shaking of your spear. God, and God alone, the Almighty, He who overturneth the mountains and controls all the elements of nature, and binds the spirit, can root out and exterminate for ever that horrid evil against which you are arrayed. O look to him, weeping hearts! weeping, bleeding, agonized hearts, "groaning and travailing in pain," longing for earth's redemption from this curse. Look to Him from whom cometh help. Do this, and you and yours shall live. Do this, and your country shall be emancipated and saved. You shall see Satan cast as lightning from heaven; the fires of the pit extinguished, and the world's redemption at the door.

A SHORT SERMON.

THE CHURCH THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

"Ye are the light of the World."—Matthew, 15: 14.

THE church of Christ has a very important and responsible part to sustain, and duty to discharge, as the grand depository of the light and blessings of salvation. She is set as a "city on a hill," to give the light of life to all who dwell in the vales of this sin-clouded world; she is planted as a "lighthouse" on the shores of time, to give men warning of the dangers to which they are exposed; and if she prove false to her awful trust, and hide her light, or let it go out, woe to them that sit in darkness, and woe to them that are out upon the great deep of human error and corruption. Where shall men look for their knowledge of the way of life, when *her* light is hid? Who shall warn men of the evils of sin and the perils of eternal damnation, when her signal is no longer visible?

The light of the church, then, ought to be *elevated.* It ought to shine from a high point, so as to command the whole scene of danger, and to challenge the observation of the world. It ought to tower high above the lights of human discovery and human agency, so that men cannot mistake it, or fail to see it. The doctrines of the gospel, as they stand forth on the inspired page, are amazingly elevated in character, and superior to the teachings of human wisdom; they borrow nothing from man, they are all of God. And coming from such a source, they occupy a peculiar vantage ground, and shine in a light wholly their own, and with a power that convicts and renews. Now Christians should, in all their teaching and living, come up to the high standard of gospel truth.

Their mental and moral being must be made to correspond with the divine nature, and lofty claims, and authoritative teachings of the religion of the Son of God. They must take high ground on every question which relates to the glory of God, and the duty of man, and the well-being of the world, and maintain their position in a spirit that never yields or compromises. They are to stand by the law of God, in all its dread sanctions, and fearful annunciations of wrath, without any abatement of its severity. They are to hold to the great fact of human apostacy and entire corruption; the atonement of Christ as the only basis of reconciliation; faith as the alone means of justification; the necessity of regeneration, and the Scriptures as the only and as a sufficient rule of faith; they are to hold and teach these, as first and fundamental truths, however much opposed by a vain philosophy, or an earth-born re-

ligion. They are to plant their feet on the ground of a free, pure, spiritual church, a "kingdom not of this world," regardless of the anathemas of corrupt hierarchies, or the snares of formalism, or the rage of a sin-mad world. If they do this, they will *elevate* their light far above the light of science, and reason, and worldly wisdom, and the world shall be constrained to see it, and confess it to be the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ."

The moral sentiment and practice of the church, should always be in *advance* of the world as well as *above* it. She must take the lead in every work of real enlightenment and progress. She is God's own chosen instrument for regenerating and saving the world. All other instruments are human and impotent, and can never, of themselves, succeed. She must let her light shine, or men will not see; put forth her strength, or they will not be made alive; go forth in the name of the Lord and battle with error, corruption, and evil, in its various forms, or no victory will be won; not a fetter will be broken; not a soul will be regenerated; society will make no progress. Woe to this dark and sinful world, when the church of God sinks to a level with it in sentiment and character. Woe to it, when the light of the sanctuary is in no wise superior to the teachings of men—when the truth as held and practised by evangelical Christians, fails to reprove the world of sin, and gives no offence and furnishes no condemnation to unregenerated sinners.

The light of the church ought to be kept *ever burning and shining*. Her's is the only light that beams upon the darkness of this world. Men are taught to *expect* instruction and warning from her. If they are sailing in dangerous seas, or hard by the dreadful reefs, or approach the fatal breakers, they expect to see some signal of warning, and are deceived and ruined if they do not. And our criminality is without excuse or extenuation, if we let our light go out and thereby leave those who expect warning and guidance from us, exposed to all the perils of spiritual shipwreck. Oh! what hope is there for sinners; how morally inevitable is their endless ruin, when Christians fail to warn them from God. And how often do they fail in this. In times of declension, like the present, how dimly burns the light on the watch-towers of Zion! darkness broods on the face of the deep; sinners dash carelessly and recklessly on; no warning meets their eye or ear that danger and destruction are nigh, and they founder on some friendless shore, or are dashed to pieces against some fatal rock.

The light of Christians ought to shine with a *clear, steady, and powerful lustre*. It should shine with a radiance sufficient to illumine the whole scene of man's duty and danger; pour forth a tide of effulgence so as no darkness shall remain unvisited and no mind be able to gainsay or resist it. A church may have the true

light, and yet it may shine so faintly as to be of no avail. She may hold to the truth, and yet so imperfect may be her advocacy and transmission of it, that her light will be a pale and uncertain one at best, failing to reach, with the power of conviction, the benighted hearts of perishing men. Or the truth she holds may be so covered up with human devices, so walled round with rites and forms, and ceremonies, as that the light is smothered and cannot burn and go forth to bless men. The Church must possess the truth in its purity, and leave it free to act in its own native simplicity and divine spirituality, if she would convict the world of sin and bring it to Christ. If the teaching of her ministry be equivocal, wavering, or time-serving; if her standards do not give a clear, honest, and manly annunciation of the truth; and more than all, if her members do not maintain personal purity, and stand forth before the world in the effulgence and attractiveness of a sanctified nature, her light will only lure men to ruin. Oh! it is a fearful thing for a church, set for the light of the world, to corrupt the pure oil of God's truth by any human admixture, or to weaken and confine its light and power by the forms and observances of a burdensome ritual, or to vary its teachings to suit the times or gain the favor of the world. Never was there a time when the light of Christianity, shining in its own matchless clearness and splendor, was more needed by the world. Never were Christians more loudly called upon by the passing signs of the times, by the actual state of the world, and by the light of the future, to put on boldness and speak out the honest truth without fear or favor; to speak as with one mouth for God and true religion; to mingle their lights into one, and hang that light out in the face of the world, and let it burn and blaze till it shall spread from "pole to pole," and be lost in the gathering brightness of the millennial day.

Christians! remember that ye are "the light of the world." Men's hearts are full of darkness—the world is full of darkness—but you have the light of Heaven, which guides to the cross, and makes wise unto salvation. O let it shine. By the mercy of Jesus—by the guilt of sin — by the misery of mankind — by the hastening doom of the sinner—by the joys of forgiveness, and the glories of heaven, be entreated to let the heavenly light go forth, and speed it on its blessed mission. Do not put it under a bushel; do not let it go out; do not dim its lustre or confine its rays. Elevate it; keep it burning; trim and replenish it often; make it steady and uniform, and brilliant as the light of day, "that men may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—EDITOR.

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SERMON CCCCLXXVI.

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THE MORAL DANGERS AND USES OF ILL HEALTH.

"Why criest thou for thine affliction? For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord."—Jer., 30: 15, 17.

There are persons in every community, and the number of such is not small, whose lives are embittered by bodily weaknesses and disabilities, of which no one can tell the trial but he that has had personal experience of it. I mean the subjects of chronic maladies, ailments, and physical sufferings, that, while they weaken the strength by the way, and greatly impede one's usefulness and activity, still do not quite shut a man up and lay him aside, like some sudden attack of acute disease; but allow him to perform life's duties, though in a suffering and toilsome way, through bodily pains and heart-aches and depression of spirits, and harrassing impediments, quite unknown to the world. They may be said to go mourning all their days with trials which few can appreciate, that often make life a heavy burden, grievous to be borne, and death to be desired as a relief, and that do in fact slowly but surely bring an end to one's earthly career long before his time. Such persons, if they are Christians, have need of great grace and patience, that after they have done and suffered the will of God, and struggled manfully through the billows of life, they may receive the promises; and if not Christians, there is the louder calls for our sympathy; for if in this life only *they* have hope, of all men are they the most miserable. Precluded by ill health from most of the enjoyments of this life, if they have no preparation or hope of a better, then are they wretched indeed.

The trial of protracted ill health, as it is a much greater calamity, so is it far more difficult to be borne, than the bereavement of friends, or the loss of property, that leaves the health unimpaired. The shock is indeed great at first when dearest

relatives are laid low, when sons and daughters, parents, brothers and sisters, and partners, dear as life, are suddenly seized from us by death; when riches take to themselves wings and fly away; when the stream of earthly resources suddenly dries up. But the buoyant heart of man soon recovers, and rises from the blow that at first stunned or even plunged our head under the billows. Time, the universal healer, assuages the violence of our anguish; life's duties call for exertion; grief cannot be nursed; property lost must be made again; and if the physical energies only remain, the mind soon regains its balance and tone after the severest bereavement.

But let the health be undermined; let slow maladies prey upon our bodies; let chronic pains and discomforts, make their home in our enfeebled frames; let the system of nerves get unstrung and disordered; let the animal spirits cease to flow, and the muscular vigor of health be impaired, without altogether laying us aside and breaking us off from the active duties of life, yet

> "Let languor and disease invade
> This trembling house of clay,"—

then is it that our trial is the greatest, *this* discipline, the most severe to which flesh and blood are here subjected. The very energy that is needed to sustain the wear and tear of life and to support its duties, has now to be spent in baffling disease, and that at the greatest disadvantage; for while perhaps the same amount of care and active service are pressing on us, there is not one-half the strength of health to supply it.

This state has its peculiar dangers as well as antidote, and there are peculiar moral uses which may be derived from it. And, forasmuch as in every community there are not a few who are so afflicted as to be now in this estate, and the healthiest persons are liable also, at some future time to be of the number, I propose to develope, for our instruction, some of the moral dangers incident to this condition, and the antidotes adapted to it. It is a subject that will be sure to apply to some and it need not fail of profit to any; for, frail as health is in the strongest, we are all liable to the incursions of disease, and to have the tide of our prosperity arrested. The healthiest this year, may be the feeblest next; the sun of prosperity that shines on us now with genial rays will not shine always. It may be a calm with us now, but we must look out for the storm, for a storm is certainly brewing up among the mountains or off on the sea, that will one day burst upon our unprepared bark. Calamities of some sort are close at hand to us all, if they are not already upon us; for few or none in this life can be long exempt from suffering. Of all it is true, there is a wave now over our heads, or there is one coming; and it is the part of wisdom, now in health and prosperity, to consider the days of *darkness*, for they shall be many, and to parry the strokes of

affliction as they come, or make the best of them by having the heart fortified by grace. In pursuing, therefore, this subject, I remark,

I. There is danger that protracted ill health will *sour the disposition*, an effect to be greatly deprecated and guarded against. It was a very true remark dropped by Cecil and preserved by his friend, that "affliction has a tendency, especially if long continued, to generate a kind of despondency and ill temper. The spirit of prayer does not necessarily come with affliction; and if this be not poured out upon a man, he will, like a wounded beast, skulk to his den and growl there." There is a pertinency in this, which those who have had much to do with chronic invalids, or long afflicted persons in any way, cannot fail sometimes to have observed. When the animal spirits are repressed, as in a long course of ill health they must be, and the spontaneous flow and vivacity of nature is almost necessarily precluded, it is nothing strange, unless a strong effort be made to the contrary, that the temper should get sour, or that it should seem so to others even when it is not. Want of cheerfulness, a quality that cannot be forced, or its semblance long assumed by any one, may be easily construed into moroseness; and, in fact, want of cheerfulness and elasticity, made habitual through the constant pressure of ill health, does not merely seem, but *is* moroseness. It puts its expression upon the countenance; it looks out gloomily and distressed at the eyes, those windows of the soul; it sets its seal upon the features. It makes one look as if his own blood were curdled, and as if living with him might curdle that of others; when it is all owing to ill health, to bodily maladies that must necessarily involve the mind, and find expression in that seldom deceptive mirror of mind, the countenance. Now and then there is a person so innately cheerful, of a disposition so irrepressably buoyant and and social, and of so happy and strong a conformation of brain and nerves, that no weight of either maladies or misfortunes can keep him under; but he will die before he will become gloomy, that is, before disease has gone so far as to prey much upon his nerves. Still he carries his head above the waves, and keeps his eye cheerfully aloft, and will do so till he dies. If now and then his cheerfulness suffer a temporary eclipse, it is only like the sun drifting through vapors that are scattering as fast as they are gathering, and it will be but a minute before you will see through some open cloud-rift the clear beams of his sunny face. Ah, how true was this of a beloved brother now in glory.

But it is not many that are so happily constituted, and even grace cannot here fully make up the lack of nature. The native temper will appear, and misfortunes and sicknesses will be apt to sour it, unless it be of that very uncommon happy make we have noticed. There must, then, pains be taken, a strug-

gle be made, uncommon grace be sought in prayer, by those who are the subjects of long-continued, or oft-recurring, disabling pains and maladies, lest they pervert and get the better of the natural disposition. Hard as it is for some persons to do, yet, an aspect of cheerfulness and sociability must be assumed, even where it is far from existing. The voice and manners of a person in health must be imitated, even where the heart only is knowing to its own bitterness and inaptitude to joy through physical suffering, in order that the mind itself may be helped to take on the cheerful type of feeling, of which it assumes the expression, and may be kept from the invasion of those morose and gloomy, and sometimes misanthropic sentiments, that add so greatly to the friction and poignancy of any trial.

Especially should it be made a matter of specific and earnest prayer, by persons so exercised, that suffering may not sour, but soften and subdue; that God's grace may be added, so as to sanctify the trial, to correct its acidities, to neutralize its pernicious tendencies and convert them to good, and to ensure all the moral uses which God designs, and that entire effect on the character which Infinite wisdom aims at in every affliction with which we are afflicted. This is the only antidote to suffering in our power, and the only way to avail ourselves of it; not only the surest remedy, but the best way of taking it.

II. There is danger of protracted ill health making one *selfish*. Whatever turns one's attention and thoughts in upon self; by whatever means a man comes to be much absorbed in himself, his own joys, trials or infirmities, by so much will his character be likely to become selfish. Now the necessity that is laid upon a person of feeble health, and "often infirmities," of spending so much time and thought upon remedial and invigorating means; the having to do so much as an invalid does for a miserable body that is so soon to be food for worms; the anxiety and care of patching and propping up, and compensating for defects of a failing constitution; the devising of ways and means to sustain the sinking spirits and repair the wasting strength,—all this tends powerfully to make the least selfish man much more selfish, and vastly to confirm and augment the selfishness of one naturally inclined that way. "All the pains which my infirmities ever brought upon me," says Baxter, "were never half so grievous an affliction to me, as the unavoidable loss of my time which they occasioned."

A selfish man, unfettered by ill health, having others dependent upon him, mingling freely in the active duties of life, engaging in schemes of benevolence, and coming into collision with others in various forms of activity, has greatly the advantage in the matter of getting rid of selfishness, over a man whose energies are restrained and hampered by indisposition and infirmity, or introverted and detained upon himself, and

kept from that outward expansion, by which self is forgotten, and living for others is made easy. The only thing a man can do in such circumstances is to watch and pray against the besetting sin, with double diligence. Aware of this tendency of the affliction with which he is afflicted, he should countermine it as they do in war. Let him surround the castle of his heart with a ditch, and let into it streams from the word of God and prayer, by which he may protect himself against the invasions of selfishness, and keep the enemy without from having intercourse with, and stirring up to sedition, the traitors he has too much reason to suspect within. All the wakefulness and solicitude of a Christian are needed here, to keep the enemy from getting the upper hand, with a valetudinarian or invalid, or any one that finds his health greatly impaired and bodily infirmities weighing him down, long before his sun is ready to set, or has even gained the meridian.

III. But there is again the danger of protracted ill health engendering hard thoughts of God, low murmurs against the justice and impartiality of his allotments and ways. Perhaps this is the most common effect of long-continued and unrelieved suffering in this way upon most minds, even that of the Christian. Certainly this is the effect upon minds unregenerated. Perfect submission, cheerful acquiesence in the Divine will, entire resignation to all God's dealings and ways, implicit confidence in the Divine rectitude and wisdom, is a great and a rare grace. They are many persons who think they are submissive, until severely tried. Then they find a reluctance of will, an unquiet temper, an unsubdued restlessness of spirit, that prove their mistake. They do not behave and quiet themselves before God, as a weaned child. There is impatience and repining; unexpressed but struggling murmurs of complaint; the spirit of insubmission felt within, though suppressed; a chafing under the yoke, and a shrinking from the whip of God's paternal discipline.

These are symptoms of insubordination, and of the want of an entire cordial yielding up of one's self to God, which it is rare not to see exhibited, more or less, even by the best of men, in seasons of severe trial. Nevertheless, entire submission is both the privilege and duty which they who are thus exercised are called to learn and practice. And how easy, after all, are outward trials, where there is the inward heart-felt peace of true submission! In all our afflictions, it matters not how bitter be the cup, if we only have the heart, as we do always have the privilege, of throwing in, to sweeten it, those two little words of adoption, "My Father!" Only let us feel that the cup is mixed with a Father's love and presented by a Father's hand, and where is the child of God who will refuse to drink it? It is our impatience and rebellion, that make our

trials a curse ; but filial love and submission turn the heaviest and worst into substantial blessings.

If real Christians, we are as truly beloved of God under afflictions, yea more so if only submissive, when beraved of friends or property, or suffering bodily with disease, repressed and laid aside, as when we are most prosperous and active, and outwardly useful in his service. God can be glorified as well in our suffering and waiting as in our enjoying and doing ; and this is an important lesson for a man to learn under affliction. It was a noble sentiment of Zwingle, uttered not long before his memorable death at the battle of Cappel, that a " carrier who has a long road to go must make up his mind to wear out his wagon and his gear during the journey. If he carry his merchandise to the appointed spot, that is enough for him. We are the wagon and the gear of God. There is not one of the articles that is not worn, twisted, or broken ; but our Great Driver will not the less accomplish by our means, his vast designs."

Let persons who are struggling under ill health remember that, and take courage from the thought, There is not one of the articles that is not worn, twisted, or broken ; but our Great Driver will not the less accomplish by our means his vast designs. Worn out, burdened, unserviceable, impeded with disease, seemingly useless, and about to be laid aside, as we may sometimes be, yet let us remember that God can as well serve himself with us then as when we are at our best estate.

" It is the Lord whose matchless skill,
Can from afflictions raise,
Matter eternity to fill
With ever-growing praise."

If the discipline be only sanctified to us, grievous as it is, it will be far better than though we were not subjected to it. And who knows but at this moment it is working out for us a greater measure of usefulness here, as well as a far more exceeding, yea, an eternal weight of glory hereafter ? In all cases, the Lord's time, not mine ; the Lord's way, not mine; the Lord's will, not mine, must be the language of the believer's heart. What Thou wilt, when Thou wilt ; how Thou wilt, where Thou wilt. Anything is well for us, if it be but for the glory of God, and by His permission or ordering, as we may be altogether certain it is.

Perhaps, too, at the very moment we are thinking our bodies are just ready to succumb to disease, and that God is going to lay us entirely by, it is the very time he is about to begin to build us up. If only brought to the state of calm, sweet, holy submission, it may be the starting point of greater usefulness, if not better health, than ever before. It is, after all, when believers " sojourn in Mesech and dwell in the tents of Kedar," that they find out the most, and have the most blessed experience of God's presence and the truths of his Word. They

learn comparatively little of the preciousness of scripture promises, until placed in circumstances of difficulty and distress. There is a beauty and consolatory power in the Bible which nothing but affliction can fully bring out. Affliction is to the Word of God, in its relations to the believer, what the sandpaper or rough pumice-stone is in the hands of the polisher, evolving a beauty and excellence that could not otherwise come out and appear. This has been so verified in the experience of some Christians, that they will declare their sorrows to have been far more than compensated by the consolations afforded in the hour of tribulation; so that it would have been clearly for their loss to have escaped their trials. Only let there be some friendly heart and hand in the darkest time to give a Christian counsel, and pluck for his healing one of the leaves from the tree of life, and help him to the use of the wings of faith and love, which sometimes are so that they will not of themselves spread and soar, and it is seldom, even under the heaviest burden of affliction, that the real child of God will not rise and sing.

I have sometimes thought it is with certain Christians as with very large birds. When I was in a whale-ship in the Pacific, and we used sometimes to catch, with hook and line thrown astern, that most majestic and beautiful of all birds, the white-winged gigantic Albatros, I observed that of itself it could never rise from the even surface of the deck and soar aloft, though unconfined and at liberty, if it liked; but we must toss the noble bird overboard, and lift him quite clear of the ship's rail, before he could use his glorious pinions, and mount aloft into the air. Then he would stretch those ample wings, and sail away through space as easily as one breathes, and as if the elastic element of air and the bird were one, making the gazer wonder and fairly long to be taking the same aerial flight.

Even so is it sometimes with the Christian. He is brought by Providence into straits and situations, whence he cannot rise and extricate himself alone, where the wings of faith and love seem to be of no avail to him, until a friendly hand lifts him up and throws him out upon the deep, where he must say, with Peter, "Lord, save; I perish." Then he loses despair; he surmounts the difficulty; he breaks his prison; he mounts up as on eagle's wings; the pinions of faith and love sustain him and bear him away aloft, and he wonders at the nightmare of doubt and fear that kept him from using them before. He is ashamed of the wrong thoughts of God that had begun to gather and darken in his mind. He sees that God was infinitely wise and good in appointing the discipline to which he has been subjected. Now, of all the wearisome days and nights that were appointed him, he would not have a single one less of pain and debility. Now those unuttered but felt murmurs

against the dispensation of Providence, fill him with shame and sorrow. Peculiar and trying as his case may have been, he discovers in it a great many blessings and advantages, and beneficial consequences to flow from it, which he did not see before. Happy is the man whose sight is thus cleared and his heart enlarged to trace the manifold wisdom and mercy of God, in dispensations that once seemed dark. May God shed light and comfort upon the path of every sufferer; and may those whose severe trial is continued ill health, find it sanctified to them, and be kept from all the moral dangers incident thereto, and from this especially, of murmuring against God.

It remains only to offer and apply a single remark. No one can be known until tried, known to himself, or known to his friends. It is *furnace*-heat that proves the metal, whether it be good or bad; and no less than that will thoroughly purge away our dross and tin. We must be wrought in the forge of suffering, and put into the crucible and alembic of trial, before our native ore will run, or its impurities be sublimed. And often, such is our hardness and stubborn temper, it is God's breath that must be blowing the bellows before the process of refining will get so far as to reflect his image from our melting and obedient souls. And then we must be moulded and hammered into various shapes by God's painful discipline, and deeply graved upon by his marking tools, before we can be at all fitted for his best uses here, or for glory hereafter. Hence the great truth as well as beauty of that familiar saying by Leighton, "that God hath many sharp cutting instruments and rough files for the polishing of his jewels; and those he especially esteems, and means to make the most resplendent, he hath oftenest his tools upon."

Brethren, let us not be sorry to have God's graving tools often at work upon us. But, rather, irritating though they sometimes be to flesh and blood, let us be anxious to have them inscribing upon us, through suffering, that "new name which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Let us desire to be made perfect by suffering, as was the great Captain of our salvation. In our religious life, it is far better to be exposed early to the heat of the furnace, and to be blown upon by the wintry blasts of adversity, and even to feel all God's waves and billows going over one, than to be gliding always upon quiet seas in the genial sun-light, or resting at ease under the grateful shade of worldly prosperity. In the soul's navigation for eternity, a storm is better than a calm, and it is safer scudding before a tempest, if it only be toward the port of peace, than lying-to in many a gale of earthly favor and applause, that will blow us anywhere than to heaven.

We have learned this on the ocean, that a ship in a storm or a heavy head-beat sea, must have sail enough on to steady *her and* steer by, and to run away from the waves or surmount

them. Otherwise she will be liable to fall into the trough of the sea, or broach-to and be boarded by a disastrous wave. So with the religious mind in the great waves of affliction: when the waters of calamity roar and are troubled, and a man's heart is failing him for fear and for looking after those things which are coming, it is often not so well and safe to lie-to and wait for a lull, brooding meanwhile upon one's trouble, and anxiously casting eyes over what seems to be a great heaving waste of impending adversity, as to keep busy, if possible, with carrying some sail, and trying to scud before the gale.

At such times of trial, there is great need of faith to stand at the helm and keep the soul steady; and this is the very benefit of adversity, of affliction by ill health, or trial in any way, that it demands and gives exercise to faith. Whatever increases and confirms that excellent grace, whatever tries and fixes that crowning virtue in a man, is a great blessing. Is there an afflicted person here, now pining under God's trying discipline by ill health, let me say to such in the words of the text, *Why criest thou for thine affliction; for I will restore health unto thee, and will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord.* Never let that heart feel, or those lips utter querulous things of the blessed God your Father; but only cry to him earnestly for spiritual health and healing, and for the strength of Christ to be made perfect in your weakness, and who knows but he will restore health unto thee, and heal thee in more senses than one! Spiritual health, we know he will give, when you sincerely and in faith ask for it; and health of body, too, will be sure to come, or a happy remove from a house that is falling to pieces, when you shall have secured all the spiritual uses of your trial. Give all diligence, then, and be earnest to have it sanctified to your spiritual and everlasting good, which may God, only wise, of His mercy grant.

And to the children of God, exercised in whatever way by affliction, we have it to say, in the words of our Saviour, "as many as I love I rebuke and chasten." "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." The furnace of affliction is meant only to refine us from our earthly dross, and from the oxides that form on us in the fire-damps of a sinful world, and to keep us soft for the impression of God's own stamp and image. It is best, then, that we should remain there till our impurities are all burned away,

> "Till formed in our obedient souls
> The image of God's love."

How much better that we should be beaten often with the rod of God, than left to grow hard and worldly, as most do, under continued prosperity. Let us kiss the rod that smites, take submissively whatever God sends, and rob calamities and misfortunes, so called, of their power to sting, by eyeing in them all, the paternal hand and wisdom and love of God. So shall

we find it good to be afflicted, that we may learn God statutes, and we shall have that effect wrought upon our characters, which, ordinarily, the discipline of suffering and trial, in some shape or other, can alone accomplish, with creatures fallen and perverse like us, and which it must therefore be the lot of all, sooner or later, to meet, in one form or another.

Let not those who live along for years comparatively exempt from trials, think it will be so always, or deem it certainly an evidence of the Divine favor and of God's satisfaction in them. It may be, it often is, far otherwise. Remember it was of rebellious Judah and Ephraim that God said, "*Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more. For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts. Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone.*" It is fearful to be let alone of God, in unsanctified prosperity; for then the man is likely to be hardened in sin, and he dies in stupidity, without hope, to have the waves of sorrow beat upon him in the next world with eternal storm.

There is a certain calm at sea, which sailors call breeding-weather; and I once knew an awful tempest to burst as it were at once upon the lap of such a calm. O, what a typhoon I seem to see now breeding in this great moral calm, to break upon the heads of the unconverted! The moment they sail out of time into the broad ocean of eternity, what a storm will fall upon many a now gallant bark, rich in its freight of immortality! Stop them, ye that love their souls, and beseech them with tears to take in Christ for their pilot, that they may avert the gathering vengeance, and outride the impending storm. And may we all be living in such a state of preparedness for life's trials, that when they come we can calmly say,

"My lifted eye, without a tear,
The gathering storm shall see;
My steadfast heart shall know no fear,
That heart shall trust in thee."

And now to that Great Being, who doeth all things well, and dispenses all life's allotments in perfect rectitude, to God only wise, be honor and glory, both now and evermore. Amen.

SERMON CCCCLXXVII.

BY REV. M. J. HICKOK,

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HOME EVANGELIZATION THE FIRST DUTY OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANS.

DEUT. 1: 21.—"Behold the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee, go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged."

THIS was the order given to the children of Israel, on their first approach to the land of promise, after their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. They had witnessed the unparalleled wonders of the Exode, the Red Sea, and of Horeb. They had received their law and ratified their national covenant at Sinai. But they were wanting in the elements of a spiritual piety, essential to such an emergency; but little of Abraham's faith lingered amongst them; and, born and educated in an atmosphere of gross idolatry, they were fearfully degenerate and perverse, and needed a severe discipline to fit them for the service enjoined, and for the reward promised, and were condemned, therefore, to long years of wandering and conflict, till of the grown up generation which left Egypt, Joshua and Caleb only passed the wilderness and entered Canaan.

Such crises of duty and destiny often overtake the Church, when her fidelity in a single emergency is decisive. Through such a period, it is believed, the church in these United States is now passing. She has to meet the amazing responsibility of evangelizing this land, or prove treacherous to the greatest and weightiest interests that have devolved upon any church since the apostolic age.

I have selected the order given to the marshalled tribes of Israel, as an appropriate Home Missionary motto for us.* It is the urgent imperative duty of the American Church, to evangelize our own country. Our policy is strikingly a home policy. I assume the existence of a missionary spirit in the great body of believers. It is the glory of the American Church, that the missionary fire of modern times was early kindled in the hearts of her sons, and that up to this hour we have been

* Preached before the Board of Home Missionaries of the Presbytery of Rochester.

among the foremost to publish the gospel to the nations. It can no longer be doubted that the spirit of missions is the vital spirit of the gospel. The gospel is obviously and eminently missionary, in all its principles and precepts and inspired examples. If we have read it aright, and felt its transforming power, we must all of us breathe a missionary spirit. We must feel ourselves committed to the missionary work. What I insist upon is, that our *home* operations are a vital part of this great enterprise. The modern efforts for the evangelization of this country, originated in the purest spirit of missions. Our own land is a vast field of itself, richer and riper than any heathen community known to us. Its decisive influence on the spread of the gospel abroad, should lead us to seek its spiritual renovation as the most hopeful means for the conversion of the world. We seek the salvation of our countrymen, not only for their own sakes, but for the sake of mankind! This is our first and most sacred duty.

I. It is so, because it is in accordance with the Divine plan for spreading the gospel. Christ's theory of instrumentality is, to arrest the individual heart, and lay the mighty motives of redemption upon it, till it shall be subdued and transformed, when that redeemed soul is to operate upon the character of its neighbor, and thrill and mould it instrumentally to the same heavenly pattern. This circle of influence, as it widens, becomes a church and secures the peculiar presence of the Holy Spirit. It is then prepared to bring its concentrated energies to bear upon the surrounding world. This is its missionary stage. And the same principle is to govern all our outward aggressive movements. The first offer of life is to be made to our neighbors and associates. When they have savingly accepted, or hopelessly rejected the offer, we may pass on to the more distant destitutions. This order of effort is very distinctly prescribed in the Scriptures. The first preachers were to go to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." The way of the Gentiles, or even a Samaritan city, they might not enter. The Saviour, after his resurrection, reminded the eleven that they were NOW to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name, among ALL nations; yet, true to this fundamental arrangement, "beginning at Jesusalem." This order they strictly followed. They opened their commission in that guilty city, and not till it had rejected the gospel, and driven them out by persecution, did they turn to the Gentiles. This is the Divine method of procedure in every age. This is the simple plan which our great Home Missionary movement contemplates.

Our Pilgrim fathers floated their religious establishments across the Atlantic, and moored them to Plymouth rock. As soon as their own immediate wants were supplied, they looked *out after* the tribes that were beyond them. Especially as

their own numbers pushed out into the wilderness, they faithfully carried to them the gospel. The true policy has ever been, to help the needy until they can help themselves, and then expect them them to pay the debt by helping those more needy beyond them. This is the simple theory of Home Missions. It is the Apostolic theory—the Divine theory. Here, in this land, it has such a breadth of application, and involves such stupendous results, that we have become skeptical about the whole matter. Our field has enlarged so rapidly, and grown suddenly into such vast dimensions, and our population is increasing in such a fearful ratio, that all past notions of colonization utterly fail. We are overwhelmed with the magnitude of our work, and with the pressure of the necessity that is laid upon us, and shrink back trembling at our own destiny, and almost doubt, at times, the ordination of God, and the sufficiency of the gospel to accomplish the work. But neither the Divine will nor the Divine economy has changed. The great Head of the church has not relinquished his claim upon us, or modified his plan of saving the world. He has furnished us a theatre for action, and for a grand, comprehensive, enduring work of faith, such as has been given to no other people; and if we are faithful to our principles, to our mission, our Master, we shall see results unparalleled in the past history of the church. But we must understand the gospel theory and plant ourselves firmly upon it. We must learn and keep in view the condition of our missionary field, and cherish and act on the conviction, that the evangelization of our own rapidly rising and influential nation is the first urgent solemn concern of the American Church.

II. It is so, because we have a prospect of success here which we have no where else. We feel bound to expend our missionary means everywhere, on this principle. Upon the foreign field, our Boards select those points where most good, present or prospective, can be rationally hoped for. If for any cause this result is defeated, they feel bound to remove to another field. Not only are we committed to the work of evangelizing our own country on the divine principle of proximity as to place and relation, but also on the economical principle that we can do more good with our means here than elsewhere. There is a marked wisdom in the rule that binds us to care first of all for the souls in our immediate locality and sphere of personal influences, and to seek above all their salvation. We shall be far more likely to influence them, than any others, and the same measure of effort will generally produce greater results. The Gospel, to achieve its blessed triumphs, must be brought into close, actual contact with men, in all their habits of thoughts and conditions of being, in their daily wants and woes, their joys and sorrows, their living and dying. Hence, example is so much insisted on, is so powerful a means in advancing Christ's

kingdom. But where can this influence be best employed, at home or abroad, upon neighbors or strangers, with a people whose language and history and genius are familiar, or with one whose peculiar mental and moral phenomena we can never perfectly understand? The answer is obvious. We have, in our own land, it may be at our very doors, souls that will be lost unless we put forth vigorous and timely efforts to save them. Comparatively little labor will be instrumental in their salvation. But if that little be withheld, it will be more tolerable for the heathen world hereafter, than for them. No plea, therefore, of superior numbers abroad, no efforts for distant benefit, will discharge us from our obligations to the perishing at our own doors! We owe them a duty which we owe to no others. We have an inducement derived from prospective success, which no other field can offer.

These are not mere speculations. The records of our Home Missionary operations show that the greatest results flow from the fewest means. Laborious, self-denying missionaries in our western settlements receive, often not more than one hundred dollars a year from the funds of the church; and with that amount, sustain the ordinances of the gospel, where, otherwise, they would not be enjoyed. They mount the utmost wave of emigration, and share the privations and hardships of the border settlers; but they lay deep down in the social state, the firm foundations of religious institutions. Very soon a church is gathered to bless and mould the growing population, for unknown generations of the future. In a very few years, it can support itself, and pay back more than it has received.

This fact has ample illustration on this very field. Western New York has been evangelized within the present century, and mostly by missionary labor at first. In 1826, when the American Home Missionary Society was formed, there were in the seventeen western counties, less than two hundred Presbyterian and Congregational churches, and about ten thousand communicants. There were then twenty-six missionaries on this field. Since that time, from fifty to seventy churches have been annually assisted. In fifteen years after the formation of the National Society, the churches on this same field had nearly doubled in number, and the communicants more than tripled. More than one hundred thousand dollars had been raised for home missions alone, forty thousands dollars more than all that had been received, which last sum has gone into the treasury of the parent society, to build up the waste places in other parts of the country. Besides more has been contributed, in some years on this field, for foreign missions, than all the benefactions of fifteen South-Western States to the same cause. The collections for the Bible, Tract, Sabbath School, and other benevolent enterprises, have been equally *liberal.*

So much for the profits of home missionary investment! It is the cheapest, the most speedy, and certain mood of doing good, presented to the heart of American philanthropy and religion. If we burn to do much good, and save many souls with our means, we should exert our influence to help on this enterprise. We here act on the beginnings of mighty nations. A little influence judiciously expended in the forming stage of society, will be multiplied and increased a thousand fold, in a very short period. The home missionary enterprise is an eminently successful work.

III. The great argument for the evangelization of this country, is, that Providence plainly points to this field, as the peculiar sphere of our highest and grandest endeavors. Not merely the revealed principle of gospel procedure, and the weightiest economical motives, direct our energies here, but a singular combination of events, give thrilling energy and point to these considerations. Our country is a perfect anomaly in the history of this earth's settlement. Its discovery and position, and the character of the people, mark it out as destined to accomplish a great and blessed work in the world. This continent was hidden from the keen eye of civilized man for thousands of years, till those great events, that mark a new era in human progress, had all taken place. The mariner's Compass, the art of Printing, and the great Reformation, had awakened movements and given birth to enterprises, new in the history of the race.

The people chosen of God to make the great experiment now making here, were fitted for their work in a peculiar manner. They were cradled in the wilderness of Germany, and "brought off from the continent just in time to save them from absorption in the great monarchies of the Middle Ages." They were nurtured in the storm-girt Isles of Great Britain, disciplined by want and war, and every species of conflict, and finally purged by the fire of the Reformation, till they stood forth, as it has been well expressed, "the true nobility of England and of the world, English yeomen and English Puritans." It has been justly said, that "the English nation was born of the best blood in all Europe, the Anglo-Saxon, and the best seed in Old England was sifted out by persecution and sown in this Western wilderness." The first settlers of our country were the most active, adventurous, independent, and unconquerable spirits of the Old World! And all the circumstances of their location and history in this New World, conspire to foster those peculiar and lofty traits of character. They left behind them the shackles of prescription; for Providence did not suffer them to remain till they had bowed to wear and hug the fetters of English Church and State. They brought with them no guide but the Bible. They found nothing here to hamper their free spirits, and they established institutions as new as the world

on which they had set foot—as fresh and free as the atmosphere they breathed—as vast and comprehensive as the continent which was open to their enterprise."

While here, they have received a peculiar training for the great work of home evangelization. They were confined for many years to the Atlantic coast, a portion of the country comparatively sterile. The rich valley of the West was garrisoned for a century and a half, by broad dark forests, and fierce, savage foes. The first generations of our settlers were nurtured amid the hard rocks and harder frosts of New England; and, under that rough discipline, acquired the character of hardy, daring and unflinching endurance, so essential to pioneer missionaries. Want, dependence, and peril, formed a fierce crucible, in which the elements of their social state were consolidated, and much of the dross of their characters burnt up.

After the revolution, and the firm establishment of our Republican government and free institutions, God opened to American enterprise the broad valley of the Mississippi, one of the richest and fairest regions on this globe!

It was an early and cherished principle with the settlers of this country, to share their new home with any who might desire or seek an asylum from oppression, where freedom of conscience might be enjoyed. The invitation went forth; and so long as it was a home of hardy toil and principle and enlightened freedom only, few, comparatively, were anxious for the boon. But when the valley of the West was opened, the report of its fertile soil and vast extent, flew like good tidings to the oppressed and overtasked and despairing millions of Europe; and there was a mighty tide set in motion towards this land. The good and the bad, the intelligent and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, have been pouring upon our shores in a constantly swelling stream! The opening of such a territory to the enterprise of our country and the world, has given a spring to population and to immigration, unexampled in the annals of man! There may have been cities built by princely munificence and power, and conquered nations poured into them, to gratify the pride and swell the glory of monarchs. But no where have men sought spontaneously an asylum and a home, in such vast numbers, as in the United States! This stream is constantly swelling. There are vast regions of our territory yet unoccupied. There is nothing in the physical condition of this country to check this living tide for centuries to come. It is almost overwhelming to contemplate the prospective millions that are to dwell in this land. The steady increase of population, during the last half century, forms an accurate *datum* upon which to base our calculations for the future. At the present rate of increase, the number of souls in the United States doubles in less than twenty-five years. According to

this ratio, our population in the year 1850, will be twenty-two and a half millions; in the year 1900, ninety millions; in 1925, one hundred and eighty millions; in 1950, three hundred and sixty millions; in 1975, seven hundred and twenty millions, and at the end of the next century, one thousand four hundred and forty millions—more than the entire present population of the globe!

But it is not to be expected that such rapid increase will continue after the whole territory becomes densely populated. According to the estimate of Professor Barrows, "rejecting the belt of barren land, about three hundred miles broad, which lies east of the Rocky Mountains, the territory now claimed by the United States may be stated, in round numbers, at two millions of square miles. On the soil of Massachusetts, in 1840, they were more than ninety-eight inhabitants, on an average, to every square mile. When the whole country shall become as densely settled only as Massachusetts, the United States will contain nearly two hundred millions of souls. But a large portion of our soil is much *better* than that of Massachusetts. Its average excellence is fully equal to that of France. The population of France is about two hundred and eight to the square mile. This will give four hundred and sixteen millions as the number of inhabitants which the United States are capable of supporting with entire comfort. It is believed this estimate falls far short of the actual capacities of our soil, under the most approved mode of culture. We seek not what is possible, but what is certain. It is therefore *certain*, as any event lying in the future, and known only by the power of human reasoning, that, unless blighted by the strokes of Providence, or given over to the scourges of unbridled sin, the limit of four hundred millions, at least, will be reached in this country, in a short period, nearly twice the present population of Europe."

This immense mass of human beings are to be influenced decisively by what we shall do for them now. We are laying the foundations on which these bustling millions are to build for time and for eternity. This is a solemn and fearful fact. It invests all our home missionary movements with awful interest and sublimity! We are living near the fountain head of tremendous influences. We are acting upon more minds, in the prospective and certain results of our conduct, than have ever yet been moved by a single impulse. Well did the sainted Evarts, in almost prophetic strains, declare, "Never was there such a call to bring consecrated talent into exercise—never such a reward as it now offers to a benevolent heart. The man whose labors shall contribute, in any material degree, to raise up and purify and ennoble the future millions of America, will do more for himself, as aiming to exert a salutary influence, than has ever yet been done for the most successful aspirant, by all that the world calls fame, The preacher who sends

abroad a sermon, full of great and striking thoughts, that command the attention of the religious world and make their way through a thousand channels to successive ages; the sacred bard who composes a hymn, that shall be stereotyped, a century hence, on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, and printed on the same page with Cowper's

"O for a closer walk with God;"

or the "Martyrs glorified" of Watts; the writer who shall print a warm and stirring treatise on practical religion, which shall stand by the side of the "Saints' Rest," in the library of every family, when our country shall become thoroughly and consistently Christian; the editor of a periodical, or the agent of any of our religious charities, who shall indite a paragraph able to move the hearts of men to great and noble deeds, and to secure for itself a permanent existence among the elements of thought and action; the man who shall do any one of these things, or anything of similar character, will exert an efficient influence over more minds than have ever yet heard the name of Homer or Cicero; and will cheer more hearts, during a single generation, than have ever yet responded to the calls of the mightiest genius. Any man, it may be added, who shall give money to build up missionary churches in the West—to lay the foundation of Christian institutions and influence, that shall become radiating points, illuminating; moulding, and saving the crowded millions of the great valley, will do more for himself, in blessing his race and laying up treasure in heaven, than in an ordinary life-time of toil, under other circumstances!

These providences of God are very peculiar. Here is a field unspeakably rich in promise and prospective results. It is our own country. These springing sovereignties at the West, are not other nations, not distant Gentiles. Their teeming millions of inhabitants are our fellow-citizens, bound to us by the ties of patriotism and humanity, of common interest and common safety! God has placed us in these responsible relations, for some great end. A large portion of these rushing thousands to the valley of the West, are foreigners of different habits, faith, and hopes from ourselves. We are accustomed to look abroad upon the lands of their nativity and sigh over their ignorance and superstition, and wretched oppression. We would gladly read them lessons of freedom, and teach them the pure Gospel, and share with them our hopes of immortality. But we cannot reach them where they are, or at best, can do but little for them; and so the Disposer of all hearts is inclining them in great numbers to seek our shores where we can labor for their salvation under the most hopeful circumstances. They will come faster than we can teach and transform them. But with God's blessing we can do much for them, and for the cause of

liberty and spiritual religion throughout the world. It is one of the clearest purposes of Providence, developed in modern times, that these dark and fettered spirits are directed to our shores to be enlightened, delivered, and saved. Our government forthwith endows them with civil liberty. It is our vocation, Christian brethren, to make them freemen of the Lord:" *they must be evangelized!* God points us to this duty, most plainly, in His providence. We are making our grand experiment amid the memorials of two distinct races which have perished from our soil. The Red man just lingers among us, sad, dispirited and lonely, a touching memento of a race that once roamed over these wide regions, proud, free and fearless. Further back, in the night of our country's history, lie the memorials of another race more enlightened and cultivated, and probably far more numerous, of which no tradition remains. Almost from the Alleghany to the Rocky Mountains, through the very heart of the great Western valley, are scattered the remains of their civilization, as enduring and almost as lofty as the everlasting hills! These mute messengers from a far-off age, utter their admonitory lessons in our ears, and teach us emphatically that a glorious country, teeming myriads, and a high degree of civilization merely, will not preserve us from a similar destiny. What monuments of wisdom and of warning has God cast about us! Clear as the sun in mid-heaven is the hand-writing of His great designs, respecting His Church here. If we fail to fulfil the trust committed to us, fail to meet the pressing emergency, the judgments of God will overtake us.

IV, *Our own preservation* demands that we should evangelize this country. We are linked together so intimately, that our destiny is inseparably connected with the religious and moral improvement of the whole country. Truth and error, purity and corruption, light and darkness, will not dwell here side by side, in peace and quietness. We have no bulwarks of hoary public opinion to control the excited elements. There is, unquestionably, to be a severe conflict of sentiments in this country. We have here the representations of every creed, in politics and religion. It is the standing maxim of practice with us, "give every man a hearing." There is probably no country on earth where the naked power of opinion, or respect for authority is more feeble, than in our own. This is especially true of the West. There society is in its elements. These elements are to be moulded and swayed by the power of superior attraction. Whatever influence is first and perseveringly applied to them, will be decisive.

It is no new truth that the West is soon to control the political destinies of this country. We see now the dawn of that day; we shall soon feel its noon-tide power. We cannot neglect the destitutions of our borders without self-ruin. The older and more orderly communities cannot cease to give their

means and influence to establish the Gospel in our new settlements, without imminent peril, "so long as there is an unpeopled and unsanctified West, stretching out towards the setting sun," in the glowing language of Prof. Post, "and annually starting nation after nation into life, the moral and religious East must vitalize and assimilate that monstrous growth, or be dragged by it, a body of death, down to the grave!" This duty involves the question of our salvation or destruction. We are bound to the West by ties more sensitive than the telegraphic wires. If the lightnings of passion play there, we shall feel the influence. The bolt that falls there will prostrate *us* without any appreciable lapse of time. Our country is *one*. Our institutions are bound up in a common destiny. We cannot settle down and enjoy our own good things, indifferent to the fate of our western neighbors. Their doom will certainly involve us in the disaster. With us, emphatically, "selfishness is suicide." The noblest promptings of patriotism, therefore, and the keenest instincts of self-preservation, impel us to do what we can to evangelize the West.

This attempt should be made without delay. This is unquestionably the propitious moment. The surging waters of social commotion at the West, will soon cut themselves channels deep and broad. Now they may be turned in almost any direction; but after a few years all will be fixed and permanent. If we ever take possession of that land for Christ, we must do so quickly. If we do not take care of the West, others will do it for us. Other eyes, and evil ones, too, are upon that great centre of population and power. That rich Valley has been more accurately mapped out, and is better understoad, perhaps, to-day, as to all its points of present and prospective influence, in Rome, than in New York. The Pope has earnest longings after the dominion of this fair land. Despotism has its eye here, and would fain erect its throne on the demolished structure of our liberties. Money and men are pouring freely into the western valley from papal countries. In every commanding position the foundations of educational and religious establishments are being laid, broad enough and deep enough to endure for all time. We must be in a hurry, or the Jesuit will be there before us. To a great extent, the West is now uncommitted. It is waiting to be moulded. It will yield to whatever influence is first brought to bear upon it. Truth there has a fair battle-field.

Some men make a merit of saying, on this subject, that they are not alarmists. For one, I confess I am alarmed, and would to God I could alarm others. It is not the possible contingency of "Barbarism" that terrifies me. There is a much nearer danger. The mass of our population, it is true, will never become Romanists until they do become barbarized; but we may be ruined before that can take place. If this portion of our

population must be benighted, let them be under the control of the priest. It is, perhaps, the least of two evils, that the mass of our foreign Romanist population are so blindly governed by their spiritual teachers. It is doubtful whether we could dispense with this agency, in restraining these ignorant and corrupt masses, and in keeping them in check until they can be remoulded by our institutions, and truly converted to God. The great difficulty is to take care of the priests. The designs upon this country are political rather than religious. The whole papal system, indeed, is religious only in name. Superstition is the strongest bond which despotism can bind on the human soul, and the Papal church is the best organized system of police which the world has ever known. Hence the perpetual alliance between that church and monarchy. The real centre of foreign Papal operations for the United States hitherto, has been *Vienna* not *Rome*.

The spirit and workings of our free institutions, are directly hostile to monarchy and to the long cherished designs of the despots of the old world; and if they shall recover from the shock which the spirit of recent revolution has given them, we may reasonably expect that they will renew and vastly increase their efforts, to subvert, if possible, our liberties, and thereby stop and roll back the swelling tide of social reform and intellectual and religious emancipation, which is seemingly threatening the very existence of the old order of things. The Papal system and organization offers the only practicable medium and agency for accomplishing this, and therefore, no available treasures of men or money will be withheld, to foster and give ascendency to these, on this republican soil.

Such have been, and will doubtless continue to be, the special patrons of Popery in the United States; and yet, the great mass of our citizens cannot see anything *alarming* in all this. All political parties court the influence of Papists, and conceal from their adherents the true sources of danger. The political press is afraid to speak out on this subject. Popery unfurls the banner of religion, and this is a sufficient pretext for treating it with sanctity. It controls votes, therefore politicians caress it. Not one political press in ten, dare publish the facts on this subject, that are known to every well-informed man. The masses, consequently, remain in ignorance. Because it is connected with politics, the pulpit, to a great extent, has been silenced. And the day may come when our religious liberties will be sold; our Protestant consciences delivered up to the keeping of Rome! Then, farewell civil freedom! Farewell intelligence! Farewell virtue! American *Republicanism* cannot long survive after American *Protestantism* is stricken down. Our glorious free-school system would perish; all that elevates, and purifies, and energizes, and blesses us as a people, would be swept away, and a dark winter-

cloud stretch out over the bright spring-tide of our history! That day, if ever it come, will witness a conflict, in comparison with which, our recent wretched war with Mexico, were a pastime. For if once the spirit of *Protestantism* is fairly roused and enlisted, there will be scenes of stern valor, and heroic endurance, and wild energy, such as American Christianity alone can produce.

As Christians, as patriots, as men, we ought, therefore, to give this country the gospel, and mould her laws, and institutions, and policy, and the masses of mind, by it. As Protestants, we should devote to it our choicest means and ceaseless vigilance. Our beloved institutions are in jeopardy. The danger is not doubtful or distant. The religious feeling must be aroused. The church must be disentangled from her unrighteous alliance with politics, so far, at least, as to hold her principles in higher estimation than party success. She must gird up her energies anew in the great work of home evangelization. We cannot prevent the Romanist from coming to our shores, and we would not if we could; but we may perchance, open his blind eyes, and eventually, break off the fetters of priestcraft from his soul. And now is the time. This is the crisis of danger! If our schools, and republican spirit, and Christian efforts can be made effectual to mould a single generation of the children of Papists, we are safe! They may surge to the sad extreme of open infidelity. That seems almost unavoidable; but it is less to be dreaded than utter want of principle, and treachery under the garb of religion. Infidels are generally willing their children should be taught religion; and through the gloomy gateway of skepticism, if no other, we may yet hope to receive the descendants of Papists into the true fold of the great Shepherd! The gifts, therefore, which we bestow upon this cause—the time, and toil, and alms, and prayers, should be large enough to pay the debts of enlightened self-interest, patriotism, and Christianity together! They will discharge us from one of the most solemn trusts ever committed to man, and be a benevolent investment, the interest of which, eternity alone can properly estimate.

V. We should evangelize this country *for the sake of the world.* As if the motive to save *four hundred millions*, so obviously dependent upon our fidelity at this high juncture, were not sufficient; the *world* is waiting for us! Equally distinct and peculiar are the indications of Providence, that it must be the work of this country, chiefly, to discipline the nations. This is a common thought and I need not dwell upon it; but it sheds peculiar interest and solemnity over all the considerations which have been named.

We use a language now spoken by fifty millions of our race and in partial use among one hundred and fifty millions more.

It, perhaps embodies "more of scientific research, practical invention, and theolegical disquisition, than any other language on earth." It eas been happily denominated the "missionary tongue." Its stores of religious literature are destined to instruct and enrich the world.

The relation of our country to the other nations of the earth, and the hardy, adventurous character of our population, preeminently fit us for the work of foreign missions. The present Secretary of the American Home Missionary Society, in one of his earliest reports, happily denominates this country "the recruiting ground for the arms of Emanuel, where the soldiers of the cross are to be enlisted and trained! The home-bred, hardy character of self-reliance and daring, which Americans derive from their country—its physical nature, its popular institutions, and the rapidity with which great events crowd its history, combine to make them the very people from whom missionaries are to be chosen. A people whose language contains so much of the science and literature of the world; whose commerce spreads its sails on every sea and drops her anchor on every strand; whose Christianity is comparatively fresh from the fountain, unmixed with the traditions, and unfettered by the establishments of men—such a people is an agent appropriate and responsible for a large share of the instrumentality for converting the world! We are under the most solemn obligations, therefore, to labor for our country and our whole country. Not merely to preserve its civil freedom and its religious privileges unimpaired, not only to save its present and future millions from eternal woe; not for any nor for all these ends, merely, but also for a larger and nobler object! Our aim is not the conquest of America *rather* than the world, but AMERICA FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD."

Christian brethren, my argument is before you, why you should "go up and possess this land, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee." He has said it in his Word and in his Providence. He has appealed to your benevolence, your patriotism, your self-interest, and self-preservation. In every manner and by every motive He has called upon you, and me, and every American Christian, to put forth our choicest efforts for the evangelization of this country. The American Home Missionary Society affords one of the best and cheapest agencies for accomplishing this great result. It is a system peculiarly *Evangelical* and *American*. It has ever had the blessing of God upon it. If properly sustained by the prayers and the contributions of the churches, it may be for the salvation of the land! The teeming millions of this land shall yet belong to Christ, and be trained for heaven; and this is one of the chief instrumentalities, we believe, that God means to employ to bring about so glorious an end. Let then, the love we bear our country, so full of promise, and rising to such a command-

ing eminence among the older nations of the world—and the love we feel for souls, precious and immortal, crowding on in such masses to the judgment—and the love we cherish for the name and cause of our ascended Savior, to whom we owe so much, and who has raised us to such spheres of influence and usefulness, for so important and holy an end, receive a full and appropriate expression in our energetic and untiring devotion to this work of missions.

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SERMON CCCCLXXVIII.

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DISCRETION IN WORLDLY AFFAIRS.

"A good man showeth favour and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with discretion." PSALM cxii. 5.

IF this were truly done by all who profess to be good men, a great reproach would be removed, and they would indeed shine as lights in the world. Yet just such business men, Christianity would have all who profess to be guided by its principles. Why are they not? May not the fault, in part, at least, be ascribed to defective instructions from the pulpit? Impressed with the vast importance that believers should be sound in the faith, may not ministers dwell so much on the *form* of sound words, as often to fail in showing the relations of Christian principle to the daily business of life, and thus make Christianity appear rather as a system of cold abstractions, than as a thing of spirit and life, as intended to direct us, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do? Is a sound faith of any *practical* importance, except as it touches the springs of life, and gives a right direction to the conduct? "Faith without works is dead, being alone." What this faith, then, requires of business men, in the conduct of their affairs, is a question of great practical importance to all who wish to give currency to the Christian religion in this selfish world. And all that is needful for the settlement of this question is suggested by the text, "A good man showeth favour and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with discretion."

"*With discretion*"—wisely fitting the means in his power to the accomplishment of desirable ends, and conducting his affairs, not only as one that must give account of himself to God, but on principles which will commend himself to the confidence and favour of his fellow-men. Discretion does for the business man what

wings do for the bird; it enables him to give the desired direction to his affairs: it puts his business, as the sailor would say, in ship-shape, and keeps it so. And indeed what is man or woman without its guiding influence? "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so," says Solomon, "is a fair woman without discretion." On the other hand, according to the same wise man, "When wisdom entereth into thy heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall keep thee from the way of the evil and the froward."

The text, it will be observed, makes the unqualified statement, that, "a good man will guide his affairs with discretion." But *will he? Does he?* Are there not some *shiftless* good men, who say one thing and do another; who often make promises which they fail to redeem; and who guide their affairs as if their great object were to produce confusion, and every evil work, and yet are professedly good men? But how can the text be true, it may be asked, and yet any good man guide his affairs with *indiscretion?* There is, we answer, no more of a contradiction here, than there is between the statement, that Christians "are the light of the world," and the fact that their conduct is sometimes anything but light. The truth is, that though the living epistles of Christianity *are* the light of the world, still the letters of those epistles, through the fault of the heart, may not all yet be legible; or remaining evil may now and then so blot the page, as to give a false impression. Yet just so far as Christianity comes out in the conduct, it *is* the light of the world; and destined to shine more and more unto the perfect day. So a good man will guide his affairs with discretion, just in proportion as he *is*, good. Shiftless now he may be; but by giving him line upon line, precept upon precept, Christianity hopes and expects to cure at length all his inconsistencies, and to make him a discreet and energetic business man.

And here let it not be thought, that the principle which we have undertaken to illustrate, is applicable only to such as are called *business men.* Has not every man affairs that need to be guided with discretion? Some, indeed, are doing a greater business than others; still every man is, or ought to be, doing something; and if he has but *one* talent, he needs such discretion in the use of it, that it shall be made to yield a lawful interest to God, and the world. Be it so, that he is a mere drop in the ocean of needed industry and benevolence; still if that drop shall fall just where a sound discretion would have it, it fulfils its mission as truly and as honourably as the plentiful shower, that refreshes far wider districts.

With the conviction, then, that the text suggests a principle of universal application, let us proceed to state what discretion demands in the management of our affairs, and some of the reasons by which it is enforced.

Without pretending to exhaust the subject, we give four items, which clearly enter into a discreet guidance of business, viz.:

I. The good man will *know* the state of his affairs :

II. He will keep them so managed that *others* will understand them when he is dead :

III. He will not assume responsibilities, which he cannot, *in all probability*, meet : and,

IV. He will at least guide his affairs, *according to law.*

I. Discretion requires, that he *know the state of his affairs.* This would seem to be a self-evident proposition ; yet it is more than can be said of not a few men in the conduct of their business. Are there not many, who know not how or where they stand ; who, though they hope that somehow all will come out well in the end, yet how precisely, as the result of deliberate calculation, they cannot tell, merely because they have no well-digested plan of enterprise, nor any thorough understanding of their position. Hence they are often in deep waters, and seldom sure of their footing.

There are minds of such capacity and forcast, that they can and *do* act amidst the complicated machinery of their affairs, like the great wheel of a manufactory, driving every subordinate wheel, with a force and precision that render certain the desired result. Such men see the end from the beginning, of what they undertake to do, and are seldom disconcerted, except by that Providence which no power or forethought of man can guard against or resist. They have a reach of thought, that seems to take in at once the main and subordinate parts of their business, making them quick to detect and prompt to correct any irregularities. That this should be true of every man in the conduct of his business, no one surely will doubt. They should *know* the state of their affairs, and be the master-spirits in their direction.

But how many posthumous developments show an ordering of business widely different from this, resulting not only in the ruin of the actors themselves, but also of their bondsmen, and others sustaining near business relations. So little did they know of their affairs, desperate though they were, that not content to go alone, they contrived to attach their friends also to the engine, which they professed to be able to guide and control, but which in fact was driving blindly and furiously on to destruction.

The only safe course, then, is for every man to know the state of his affairs, and to be as sure as possible of his footing. Such knowledge is essential to success, keeping the mind clear, and the hands strong, and the resolution vigorous. Misgiving and timidity can never succeed. Ignorance of the state of one's business must, in the end, as a general rule, result in the ruin of his property, and the irreparable injury of his character.

II. A discreet guidance of one's affairs requires that they be so arranged, that *others can understand them when he is dead.*

His books and papers should be kept in such order, that all interested shall be able to give a clear account of all his transactions. "Set thine house in order," said a prophet to a man of business, "for thou shalt die and not live;" an admonition suited to every man in a world like this, where we know not what a day may bring forth. In such circumstances, discretion would seem to require, that he keep such a record of his business from day to day, as to save those who come after him from injury. Such an ordering of business will give a man greater confidence in himself, because it gives the calm mind, and the consciousness of honourable aims. What he prepares so that others can understand, he will most surely understand himself; and this being the method of his thoughts, will increase his fitness for business by adding to the clearness of his apprehensions, and the discipline of his mind. It is taking out of the way whatever can make him stumble. "He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely." He who lies down at night, as Washington is said to have done, with every important entry made, as if he should not live to make another, we cannot doubt, guides his affairs with discretion. Let any one who doubts the practicability of this plan, reflect what more he would do, if he knew that his last night on earth had come, and he will be a doubter no longer.

III. A discreet management of his business *forbids a man to assume responsibilities*, which he cannot in all probability meet.

We say *in all probability;* because it is impossible for any man to forsee, and thus guard against the many contingencies which sometimes thwart the best concerted plans. He may promise to meet an engagement, or to pay a debt a few days hence; but before the time arrives, he may die, or some unexpected event may put it beyond his power to redeem his pledge. But what we mean is, that no man should *promise* to do what, at the time, he does not really mean to do, and what he knows the probabilities of the case are against his performing.

Yet, unless we greatly mistake, there are men, who, to get rid of an importunate creditor, will promise to pay his claim on a certain specified day, when it is obvious to their own minds at the moment, that the pledge will not, because it cannot, be redeemed; and thus they live, from year to year, making promises only to break them, till at length their character for truth becomes absolutely infamous. Such a case need only to be stated to secure for it a universal condemnation. And yet it is a case of no unfrequent occurrence.

Are there not men, also, who seek for renewed pecuniary accommodations at Banks, or other sources, while the great pro-

bability is, that by success they will only add to the weight of the mill-stone that is already dragging them down into the sea of debt? Such men hope, indeed that this policy will somehow extricate them at length from embarrassment, while, at the same time, they know that there is more ground for fear than for hope.

Now, such a course is not merely injurious to others, but destructive of that essential element of successful enterprise, viz., courage, inspired by confidence in one's own resources. How strong a man is made to feel by the self-assurance, that he will do as he agreed—that his word is as reliable as a written bond, and that trials have served but to strengthen his determination to meet *all* his responsibilities.

IV. Discretion requires *that the good man guide his affairs at least according to law.*

We say *at least*, because such a man is expected to do more and better than to meet the requirements of mere human law: or as the text expresses it, "the *good man showeth favor and lendeth.*" This is more than human laws can bind men to perform; their great object being to secure simple *justice* between man and man, while the law of Christ requires the recognizance and application of the law of benevolence, in all our dealings with mankind.

For this reason we said that the good man will *at least* guide his affairs according to law. For can a man be good, and not be a law-abiding man? setting up his simple will against the will of the government, when it requires the sacrifice of no religious principle, but only that he yield his selfish interests to the demands of the public good! Can he sell intoxicating drinks, or keep houses of ill-fame, or do what human laws forbid, which is manifestly injurious to his neighbours, and still be the good man, who guides his affairs with discretion? Be it so, that the law is not approved by the individual himself, or that he supposes it to operate to his disadvantage, still Christian principle requires him to be subject to the powers that be, and to yield obedience to law, till it is repealed in the manner provided for by the constitution of the government. Of all men, those who believe in the general licentiousness of the human heart should be the last to break down the fences which human legislation has attempted to throw around it—they should be the foremost for order and for law, else the salt of the earth has lost its savor.

And even when the law releases the debtor from the legal claims of his creditor, by his taking advantage of the Bankrupt Act, or other legislative provisions, still the discretion, by which the good man professes to guide his affairs, requires that he discharge the debt, principal and interest, should he ever acquire the means of doing it. Doing less than this, in such circumstances, he will

fail to "provide things *honest* in the sight of all men," and therefore to guide his affairs with discretion.

Thus far all seems to be plain. *The good man*, if discreet in the management of his business, *will know the state of his affairs; he will also leave them at his death in such order that others can understand them; he will not assume responsibilities which he will probably fail to meet; and he will, at least, guide his affairs according to law.*

But we must not dismiss the subject till we have noticed some of the reasons which more particularly enforce these points of duty on good men, in the guidance of their affairs:

1. *A regard to Christian principle.*

How much it honours the religion of Christ, when its friends carry its noble and generous spirit into all their business transactions! Yet Christianity will never be satisfied, until good men are as religious in their *business* as in their *prayers:* and when they are—when the generous and upright spirit of religion enters into, and moulds all their habits of business, they will indeed stand before the world "living epistles," forcibly commending the Gospel of Jesus Christ to universal acceptance. To this end, the good man should ever have studious regard in the conduct of his affairs. He should remember, that he liveth not unto himself, but to illustrate the power of Christian principle to restore the ruins of the fall, and to raise the soul above the degrading influences of selfishness.

2. The good man should guide his affairs with discretion, *from a regard to his own character and influence.*

No good man can exert a wide influence in this world without a sound character for enterprise. Those who often stumble and fall, cannot be used as the pillars of society. Blown about by every wind of doctrine, and acting without any well settled plan of enterprise, promising much and performing but little, they will soon be set aside as unfit for the public service. All are subjected to trials, which develop character, and show who are the real business men in the several professions, and who know how to guide the affairs entrusted to them with discretion. These are the men of power—the master-spirits of their generation. Nor is this power confined to such as have great reach of thought, enabling them to grasp the details of a large and complicated business. The man of one talent, if he is known to use it to the best advantage, has an influence, in proportion to his ability, as truly as the possessor of five talents. And it is to such an one, that the community will at length say, "Friend, go up higher; cultivate this larger field;" for to him that hath, and uses it well, will more be

given; and "he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

3. A good man should guide his affairs with discretion *from a sense of justice to others.*

Society is injured, if any one member fail to bear his part with discretion. It is like breaking one link in the chain which bears up the interests of the community. We wrong *others*, as well as ourselves, by indiscreetly managing our affairs—by making promises which we fail to redeem—and engaging in a business which we are unable to direct. The redemption of the promise made to A may be all that can give him the ability to redeem his to B; and so down through all the letters of the alphabet, there will be found a dependence of one upon another, insomuch that A's single failure to redeem his pledge to B may send disappointment along the whole line, creating heart-burning and strife, which may embitter whole neighbourhoods towards each other for years, and utterly paralyze the power of the Christian profession.

The good man, then, should guide his affairs with discretion, to prevent such calamitous results to society.

4. The good man should guide his affairs with discretion, *from a regard to the account which he is soon to give of his stewardship to God.*

The thought that all his business transactions are to be reviewed at the final judgment, should prompt him to guide all the affairs of this life with thoughtfulness and wisdom—to dismiss and disregard every suggestion of selfishness in favour of dishonesty—or of such resting from self-denying toil, as will bring injury to others. Not a contract should be concluded, nor an entry made in his books, nor any plan of business adopted, without the previous inquiry how it will appear in the great unfolding day. Indeed, what is so fitted to make a thorough business man, and to keep him true to himself, to society, and to the great Master, as the practical hold upon his thoughts of this truth, "Thou God, seest me." Such a conviction, vivid and influential, morning, noon, and night, will, beyond a doubt, induce him TO GUIDE HIS AFFAIRS WITH DISCRETION.

SERMON CCCCLXXIX.

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THE USES AND ABUSES OF MONEY.

"Charge them that are rich in this world—that they do good, that they be rich in good works ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come."
1 TIMOTHY vi. 17, 18, 19.

It is one distinguishing characteristic of the Scriptures, that while they exhibit the duties which mankind in common owe to each other and to God, they also point out the particular duties of different classes of individuals, resulting from their peculiar circumstances and relations. Parents and children, magistrates and subjects, ministers and people, masters and servants, the rich and the poor, the aged, the middle-aged and the young, have only to open the Bible to find their respective duties indicated and urged with the utmost clearness and force. In our text, the apostle charges Timothy, a young minister, faithfully to set forth the obligations of the rich, and he would have them encouraged to be faithful in the use of their wealth, by the consideration that they would thereby lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come.

Is there an individual present who is congratulating himself that the passage of Scripture which I have just read, and of course the remarks which I may derive from it, do not apply to *him*, inasmuch as he is not rich; nay, that the text virtually absolves him from the obligations of charity, as it seems to limit the charge to men in opulent circumstances,—that individual, let me say, is so far a self-deceiver. The word *rich* is a relative term, the meaning of which is decided by the standard of wealth that prevails in a community. What would be regarded as bare competence in one place, would be considered affluence in another. Besides, the precept in the text is to be taken in connection with other precepts, such as those that require every man to do good according to his ability, and to render to others as he would that others should do to him; and thus the spirit of it fairly applies to other classes as well as the rich. True it is that a man's first duty is to provide for his own subsistence and that of his family; and if he

really have nothing, and can honestly obtain nothing, beyond what is essential to this, why then he is absolved from this particular form of doing good, however much he may be able to do, and may be bound to do, in other ways. But if God puts at the disposal of an individual property more than is necessary for the purposes I have mentioned—whether he be rich according to the prevailing standard or not—he comes fairly within the range of the injunction in the text; and the motive which the text suggests may fairly be urged upon him.

The general topic which I deduce from the text is the *true value of money*. I am aware that this is a subject of some delicacy—a subject upon which most people are more impatient of anything that has the appearance of dictation, than almost any other. Well I do not blame them for that, nor do I intend, in the remarks that I am to make, to render myself obnoxious to the charge of having made such an attempt. Nevertheless you will agree with me that ministers are bound by the very terms of their commission to declare the whole counsel of God; and as God has been pleased to reveal something in regard to the manner in which we should use our worldly substance, so we are bound to preach this as truly as any other part of the record; giving it, so far as we can, the same prominence which the Bible gives it. I only ask that whatever I shall say may be judged by the standard of God's word; and if you are satisfied that it is not in accordance with *that*, let it be rejected as nothing worth; but if your reason and conscience witness to the truth and right of what I say, then let nothing prevent you from acting in accordance with your honest convictions.

The great principle on which all our reasonings in this discourse must depend, and which I beg you to keep in mind as we proceed, is this—that *the value of money is to be estimated by the amount of happiness which it produces;* and hence that it is of great value, or little value, or no value, or greatly worse than nothing, according to the purposes to which it is applied.

If I mistake not, it will be easy to show that money used for mere selfish and worldly ends, without reference to God or the future, is scarcely to be regarded as a blessing.

What are the elements of true happiness? I will limit myself for the present to two—*a good conscience, and a contented mind*; and I am sure that a moment's reflection will show you that money employed for the purposes which I have mentioned, does not promote either of these.

How is it with the first—*a good conscience?* Conscience properly enlightened, always renders its testimony in favour of the right; and there is no such thing as legitimate *peace* of conscience that is not inspired by the consciousness of *being* in the right. Now God has commanded that we use the wealth which he has

his animal appetites that will turn to his account on the score of happiness.

2. There is no great enjoyment to be derived from money, as it ministers to *the pride of life*. Far be it from me to plead the cause of a sanctimonious austerity in respect to this or any other subject; or to administer a rebuke to those who can afford it, for gratifying, within reasonable limits, in their style of living, a cultivated taste. I would leave it to every Christian's conscience to decide for himself, in respect to this matter; though I would counsel him to decide in view of the relations he sustains to his fellowmen, and of the account he must render at the judgment; but at the same time I have no hesitation in saying that an extravagant regard to external splendour bring with it little of true enjoyment; and I have no doubt if you will commune with your hearts honestly on the subject, you will find that I am borne out in this declaration by their testimony. The Queen of England is surrounded every day with the highest luxuries and elegancies that the world can furnish, and she has never known any condition materially different; and if you or I were to walk through her palace, doubtless we should be amazed by the magnificence that pervades it; but to herself it is an every day matter, and doubtless she thinks as little of it as you do of the furniture in your dwelling. And so it is substantially in every case—what at first nourishes the self-complacency, and if you please, in a sense administers to the happiness of its possessor—soon comes, through the influence of habit, to be looked upon with indifference; and then the cravings of the same passion are to be met by still farther indulgence. Does some votary of fashion tell me that I know nothing of the pleasure incident to some splendid scene of fashionable amusement that is now and then heard of in the circles of the rich. Be it so—perhaps I do not—but I can conjecture something of the physical exhaustion and weariness that succeeds; of the utter inability frequently induced, to attend for a time to the ordinary duties of life; of the envy that arises in some minds, and other evil passions that are awakened in others; and last, though not least, of the unsatisfying nature of one's own subsequent reflection—of the conviction that will occasionally be felt, that all that splendour was vanity; of the sting of conscience, when, in spite of all these attractions, God and eternity sometines force themselves upon the mind. To surround one's self with extravagant demonstrations of worldly splendour, and move continually in what is commonly called the circles of high life—indeed *costs* much, but when weighed in the balance, really amounts to very little. It does not minister to a man's true dignity or happiness.

3. Nor yet again, does money secure more of true enjoyment, when employed in the pursuits of *worldly ambition*. Who does

not know that worldly honour is often obtained at great expense? A considerable fortune has not unfrequently been the price of being a member of the British parliament; and even in our own country, rich men sometimes make themselves poor in an effort—perhaps an unsuccessful effort—to reach some high post of worldly honour. We will admit in a given case, that the effort is crowned with success; and the individual reaches the lofty place upon which his heart has been set—but how little do you know of the inconvenience or the trouble incident to the post he has obtained! His friends, to whom he immediately owes his elevation, will not improbably regard him as their debtor, and expect favors from him which he has not the power to bestow; and in their disappointment, will become soured both toward his person and his administration. And those whose good-will he never possessed, will delight to make him uneasy in a place to which they would never have had him exalted. Whoever will contemplate the condition of an individual, occupying a high post of authority, amid the strifes and collisions and jealousies of party,—amidst the clamours and restlessness of some, and the aspirings and plots of others,—if he estimate things aright, will be little likely to envy his condition. A man who holds such a place from a conscious regard to the honour of God, and the best interest of his country, may well afford to encounter all the evils to which it subjects him; but he who aspires to it merely from party considerations, or the love of distinction, has a hard bargain, if he gain it; the artificial dignity that it may throw around him, is but a poor consideration for the burden of care that it lays upon him, and the fever of anxiety that it creates within him.

4. Nor can any thing better be said of the advantages of accumulating large estates to be left as *an inheritance for children*. Money is certainly well disposed of, that is employed in the *education* of children; in training their various faculties for useful and honourable exertions; and those parents who fail to do this, while they have it in their power, are certainly chargeable with culpable and criminal neglect. So also it may be very proper for parents to assist their children at their first setting out in life, that they may enter unembarrassed upon their respective callings; and where there is a prospective physical inability from any cause to procure their own subsistence, it is certainly very desirable that some parental provision should be made for them, that shall place them out of the reach of want. But all this is quite different from the hoarding up of superfluous wealth, merely to leave children in the possession of a large fortune. I know there are instances in which children resist the temptations incident both to the expectation and the possession of such an inheritance; and use the great estates that descend to them as an enlightened Christian mind could desire; and I honour every such

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case as a noble example of superiority to the most powerful temptations; but I appeal to your own observation, when I ask whether the cases to which I have referred, do not constitute exceptions from the mass; whether children who are educated to the expectation of very large fortunes, do not realize a curse even in the expectation. I can think of men of eminent usefulness, who have grown up in these circumstances; but I can think of many more, whose history is the mere history of blighted hopes; and in almost all cases, property that is thus easily acquired, is very quickly, and, for the most part, very unprofitably dispersed. And there is not the shadow of mystery in all this. No matter what the original faculties of a child may be, they will never be rightly developed without exercise; and they will not be called into exercise without some motive; and if a child, as soon as he is capable of understanding it, is taught that he is to be left in circumstances in which there is no occasion for personal effort, in order to his subsistence, the danger is, that his natural tendencies to indolence will counteract every other stimulus that may be presented; and that he will settle at least into a drone—a mere cumberer of the ground. If nothing worse, parents would render their children the best service, if they would train them from the very beginning, to the legitimate exercise of their faculties; for in no other way have they a right to expect a mature and useful character. Let them then be careful that they oppose no obstacle to the attainment of this high end. You may search the records of intellectual and moral greatness all over the land, and wherever you find great acquirements, and noble virtues, and eminent usefulness; there you will find there has been great efforts; and in much the greater number of instances, that it has been effort dictated by necessity, if not absolute poverty.

5. I only remark, in the fifth place, that the use to which the *miser* puts his property, is of all others, the most absurd and profitless. He labours, and strives, and tugs, and practises the most rigid self-denial—for what? To accumulate property merely for the sake of knowing that he possesses it. He is willing to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness—nay, even to forego the common comforts of life, that he may be cheered with the delightful reflection that his coffers are full of silver and gold, and that with all his apparent poverty, he might, if he would, live in the splendors of affluence. The cries of the widow and orphan falls upon his ear, but he has no heart to help them. The claims of his country or of the world are urged upon his regard, but these also he can dismiss without a thought. Money is the burden of his thoughts by day, and of his dreams by night. Money is the beginning and ending of all his plans. Money—it is the sweetest sound that can fall upon his ear—the most attractive things that can be presented to his eye. Where there is money to be made,

there he seems to breathe the air of Paradise ; and every other place is to him as the heath in the desert. It is bad enough to be a worshipper of money for the sake of the means of worldly enjoyment which it may procure ; but to bow down before the shrine on Mammon, merely for *its own* sake—to deny one's self common comforts, for the sake of dreaming of greater possessions—this is the very height of infatuation! I have known a man, and doubtless you have known similar cases, who occupied a dwelling that was little better than a hovel—who lived on the coarsest food, and was clad in the meanest attire, and slept on a bed of straw, and in his whole appearance would have seemed an example of the most abject poverty—who yet could show an estate, and actually left one of hundreds of thousands. The sufferer might have supplicated and groaned, and even died at his door, and not a farthing would this prince of misers have bestowed for his relief. Who envies the character,—who covets the enjoyments,—who blesses the memory of such a man ? Better a thousand fold to be the destitute and wretched object that the miser appears to be, than to assume that appearance because he is a miser. Better be clothed in rags, and fed on bread and water from necessity than from choice ; especially when that choice is dictated by an *ignoble* regard for money.

There is one consideration which I must not omit to notice, equally applicable to all the classes I have mentioned, that shows more than anything else, of how little value money is, when applied to purposes of present and selfish gratification. I refer to the fact that this life—the period to which this enjoyment is to be limited—is a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. Admit that the enjoyment that results from these uses of money were a thousand times greater than it is—admit even that money could purchase an entire freedom from worldly anxiety and sorrow, and could command for its possessor every pleasure that his heart could covet—still, considering the short duration of human life, all that it could purchase would be of comparatively little value. Some of you have lived in the enjoyment of prosperity, perhaps thirty, forty, or fifty years ; be it that you have enjoyed during this period everything that great wealth could bring you,—how brief, how like the motion of the weaver's shuttle, does this period seem to you in the review ! Now, according to the common course of nature, you will die in a period shorter than that which you have lived already. Estimate, then, the amount of good which you are to expect from your wealth hereafter by what you have actually received from it hitherto, and say how much is it worth to be a rich man, and live for this world only. If the period that you *have* lived seems short, that which you *are* to live will seem shorter ; and old age, will bring with it its evil days in spite of all that your riches can do to avert them.

And then the effect of your wealth in rendering you happy is terminated, while you have before you a whole eternity that is utterly unprovided for— an eternity of which you have taken no thought because you were absorbed in making money—an eternity whose miseries you chose to incur, rather than voluntarily loosen your hold of your worldly possessions. Oh, is not this a thought to rebuke the presumption, to awaken the concern, of the prosperous worldling! Would that every such person, that he may estimate aright the value of his money, would first solve that momentous problem, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

But if the happiness which money procures, when applied to purposes of mere worldly gratification, is grovelling in its nature and limited in its duration, and therefore of comparatively little worth, does it hence follow that money is of little value? By no means; for there is a way in which the treasures of earth may be converted into the treasures of heaven; in which that which perishes with the using, which the fire may burn, or the tempest sweep away, may become the seed of the incorruptible and imperishable, and may minister to the soul's highest enjoyment through everlasting ages. This is directly intimated in the closing part of our text—"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come." We are not to suppose that the apostle here conveys, or that there is anything in Scripture to justify, the idea that men, by any use of their property, can *merit* a reward at the hand of God; for when they have done all that is in their power to do, they are still unprofitable servants; but God, in the economy of His grace, has been pleased to promise a reward to their imperfect and feeble, but well-meant efforts in His service, as if it were a matter of personal merit. To those whom He has entrusted with wealth, He has promised, if they be found faithful in applying it for the purposes for which it was intended, that they shall inherit durable riches—an unfailing portion in heaven.

In what way, then, may the treasures of earth be used, so as to be subservient to our substantial and immortal happiness?

I answer in general, by being consecrated, in the exercise of a truly benevolent and Christian spirit, to purposes of real beneficence—to the intellectual, and moral and spiritual improvement of our fellow-men. I beg that I may not here be misunderstood. Far be it from me to intimate that there is anything in the mere act of giving away money, independent of the motive by which we are actuated, that can draw upon us God's approving smile. We must not only be ready to distribute and willing to communicate, but we must do it from truly benevolent feelings, and from a regard to the authority and honour of God. Such kind of beneficence as this will certainly secure for us the Divine blessing.

Do you inquire more particularly what are the objects towards which your charitable regards may properly be directed? I answer, whatever will be likely to promote the best interests of your fellow-creatures, in the life that now is or that which is to come, deserves your consideration and patronage. The poor you have with you always. Not a sun rises upon our city, but rises upon scenes of poverty and suffering, where charity might very properly go and scatter her blessings. The institutions of religion demand our support; for not only are these ordained by infinite wisdom, but they are the great channel of Divine influence—the principal means of maintaining the cause of truth and piety in the world. The spiritual wants of our fellow-men far and near—from Nova Zembla to Cape Horn, from California to Japan, make their claims upon us—claims which are founded in their relations to us as creatures of the same race and children of the same Father. There is the degraded Hottentot, who is scarcely enough enlightened to know that he is not a brute; there is the savage who roams through the forest in quest of prey, or on errands of blood, talking indeed of the Great Spirit, and yet knowing nothing of the true God; there is the forlorn and outcast Jew who has the same spirit toward the religion of Christ that led his fathers to crucify its Author; there is the deluded disciple of the false Prophet, with the Koran in the one hand and the sword in the other; there are millions who profess Christianity, who yet hold it in ignorance and unrighteousness—knowing little of its truth and nothing of its power—all these are circumstances to require the interposition of Christian charity. You may give for bringing the Gospel in contact with the minds of any or all of these, and if you give with a right spirit, your gifts shall not be lost either to others or to yourself. The bread which you cast upon the waters will certainly return to you, even though it should not be for many days.

And in what way may the Christian who thus obeys his Master's will in respect to the use of his property, expect his reward? I answer—he may look for it here, but chiefly hereafter. That inward consciousness that he feels of having done right, is a part of it. That warm and generous spirit of benevolence, brought into lively and delightful exercise, is a part of it. The approving smile of his Redeemer, and the gracious assurance, that what he does to his children He will recognize as done to Himself, is part of it. And I may add, though it be not the *most* essential part of his reward, the favor in which he is held by his fellow-men; and the good name that he leaves behind him, after he is gone, is part of it. Pardon me if I refer you to an example. Where, within our circle at least, is there a name which we pronounce—which the whole community pronounces, with more veneration, than that of the late Stephen Van Rensselaer? And yet if you strip him of the character of a philanthropist,—if you leave out of view the disposition which he manifested to do good to his

fellow-creatures—you must all acknowledge that the brightest attraction that belonged to his character, and that now belongs to his memory, is departed. You have made of him another man; and you feel that the identity of the good, and beautiful, and venerable original is gone. It is natural, it is even virtuous, to desire, in a proper manner, the favorable regards, and the grateful remembrance, of our fellow-men; and, I repeat, this is one part of the appropriate reward of a life of benevolence.

But it is not the noblest part—that is reserved for a future and better state of existence. We may not be able fully to analyze it now, and show you the noble ingredients of which it is composed; but we cannot doubt that it will consist partly in the grateful recognition—the hearty and holy welcome, with which they will be met by those whom their benefactions have contributed to rescue from ruin. You give your money to some missionary object, and you only know in general the channel into which it passes; but you *may* know at the judgment, the very individuals to whom God by His providence and Spirit directed it as life to the dead. And imagine what would be your emotions if some Hottentot or Hindoo, some Jew or Mahommedan, or rather a multitude of them, should rush gratefully into your embrace, and with tears of gratitude and joy (for such tears, for aught I know, may be in Heaven), should acknowledge you as under God their everlasting Benefactor. And more than all, and above all, there will be the endless benedictions of the great and generous Saviour: through all eternity He will remember His own gracious declaration at the judgment, and act upon it, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Oh, the unutterable glory of that reward, which is yet in a great degree hidden from us, because it surpasses our highest conceptions!

The great practical conclusion from all that has been said in this discourse, is this—that fearful responsibility is involved in being rich! Not so, I am aware, in the verdict of the world. The great mass who covet riches and who acquire riches, regard them when acquired, as in the strictest sense their own; and regard themselves as accountable only *to* themselves, for the manner in which they use them. But the truth is, they have nothing but what comes *from* God; nothing for which they must not give an account *to* God. See then how the case stands; and decide for yourself whether every rich man may not well tremble for his responsibility. He has in his possession that which, being used according to the will of the Master, will turn into heavenly treasure, and exalt his condition through eternity; but being perverted, will accumulate misery for him in the next world, and weigh upon his soul for ever, as an intolerable burden. Let no man speak lightly of the value of money. You may indeed speak lightly of it, if you contemplate it with reference to purposes of mere self-indulgence; but if you view it as a means of doing good—of

laying up for yourselves in store, a good foundation against the time to come, there is no danger that you will estimate its value too highly. When I look around me and see how much evil money might be applied to remedy, how much good it might be applied to accomplish; when I travel off in imagination into the wilderness, and see how its savage inhabitants are living in a darkness that can be felt; when I think of the distant mountains, and valleys of my country, which are rapidly becoming settled with immortal beings, but yet rarely echo to the joyful sound; when I stretch my views across the ocean, and see the hundreds of millions who are fast bound in the chains of superstition and error, and passing by crowds into the invisible world, where there is no atoning blood and no renewing grace; when I look down to hell, and contemplate the weeping and wailing, and then look up to heaven, and let my eye linger upon its glories, and my ear upon its melodies, and my heart upon its ecstacies; nay, when I take such a survey of the world around, below, above, I cannot help saying, "Blessed are ye who are rich; for by means of your wealth, you may cause the widow's heart to sing; you may cause the wilderness to blossom; you may reproduce somewhat of the verdure of Eden, where not a plant of righteousness now flourishes; you may strike a blow at pagan temples, that shall make them totter and tremble; you may hasten the glorious and complete reign of our Immanuel upon earth; you may save immortal souls from deathless woe; you may add to the population, and increase the ecstacies of heaven." Is it not—I appeal to *you*—is it not in view of what, by God's blessing may be effected by money, is it not a blessed thing to be rich? But in view of what may come from the *abuse* of money, is it not also a *fearful* thing to be rich? Better a thousand times live the life and die the death of the most abject beggar, than to have enjoyed the highest affluence, and be met at last with the charge of having wasted the Lord's goods.

A SHORT SERMON.

"Where art thou?"—Gen. 3: 9.

GOD thus addressed the first human transgressor. "The voice of the Lord God was heard walking in the garden, in the cool of the day,"—it was the very day of the fall, for sin never fails to draw after it a quick retribution; and the Lord had come down to go the rounds of man's new abode, and see what he was about. But Adam fled at His approach; guilt could not abide His coming; fear seized upon him, and he hid himself. God found that sinner in a sad condition; guilty, afraid, trembling, wholly unprepared to meet His righteous Judge; and fearful was the sentence pronounced against him.

So God will reckon with every sinner. He will search out and punish every guilty soul. Think not to sin and escape. God may long delay, and seem to connive at your wickedness; justice may slumber and damnation be restrained; but the hour of retribution will come at last to each and to all; and it will be an hour of dismay, and trembling, and hopeless doom to the impenitent and unforgiven. For every man of us has a moral character and position of his own; and though he may fail to perceive it, and the world be ignorant of it, it is clearly defined in the sight of God, and perfectly understood by Him. The Omniscient eye beholds at this moment the actual character and habitation of each individual being; the Lord God is walking to and fro in the earth, as in the garden of old, to see what is done, to look after the erring, to awake the sleeper, to surprise the hypocrite, and make inquisition for neglect and transgression. He passes by the sinner in His word, or comes to him in some startling providence, and cries in his ear, "Where art thou?" His voice is heard by the Christian, demanding an account of himself, repentance for sins committed, a return to duty, holy living, and a readiness for the reckoning hour.

And where is the professing *Christian* to-day, while God is seeking him out in the sanctuary? It is easy to say where you *ought* to be, but alas, we fear that many of you will not be found there. And

1. The Christian ought always to be at his proper and assigned *work*. He has a peculiar and important work to perform. It is the work of salvation, of repentance and faith, of holy living and serving God. It is the work of prayer, of inward conflicts with

corruption, and striving against the world, the flesh, and the devil; the work of warning and entreating sinners to flee from the wrath to come; the work of imitating the example, and obeying the gospel, and advancing the kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth. There is no work so needful, so solemn and responsible as this; none, the neglect of which is attended with consequences so serious and lasting. It is a "high calling" in which the Christian is made "a spectacle unto the world, even to angels and to men." And God fails not to mark every dereliction, to note every hour, every gift and power not given to the work of salvation; and soon will He reckon with every laborer, and reward or punish, according as they have been diligent or negligent.

2. The Christian ought ever to be in his proper *place*. Whoever he be, and whatever his gifts, or station, or circumstances in life, there is a place assigned him in the mind and providence of God; and none can fill that place so well as he; and he ought to seek it, and stand in his lot; he shrinks from it or abandons it at the peril of his salvation. He has his own place in the family circle—in the church of Christ—in every sphere of Christian duty and enterprise—and in the world of guilt, and misery, and ignorance around him. He has his own place in the hour for private devotion, on the Sabbath, and during each day of the week; a proper place as a creature of God, and a sinner seeking life; as a disciple of the Divine Teacher; as a servant of the Lord who bought him; as a steward entrusted with many talents; as a frail and dying mortal hastening to judgment and eternity. And for such an one to be found out of his place in the day of God's visitation, to have run uncalled, or refused when bidden, or to have vacated his post untold, will be dreadful indeed.

3. The Christian ought ever to be *in a state of mind to seek the Divine blessing*. While in the line of duty, busy at his work, and radiating his sphere with the light of holy example, and pious precept, his heart *will* go up to God in earnest desire, and His approbation and love will be the joy of existence, a blessed reward.

But alas! sin cherished, or duty neglected, not only loses us the favor of God, but what is, if possible, worse still, robs us of the disposition to desire or seek it. How many, for this reason, are serving God from constraint, and not from choice! To how many is religion a task, and the service of Christ a weariness, and prayer itself anything but a pleasure, because they engage in what they know to be wrong, or pursue their worldly business in a selfish and prayerless spirit, or enter into schemes of gain, or pleasure, or alliances in trade, or politics, or friendship, which the holy God cannot sanction; or they live so far away from Christ, and so aside from Christian duty in their whole spirit and course of conduct, as to be utter strangers to the joy and confidence of faith; to walk in perpetual darkness and fear, and be "as the mountains of Gilboa," unrefreshed by rain or dew, sterile and desolate.

4. The Christian ought ever to be *where God will be felt to be*

no intruder. Not until the first man had *sinned*, was there aught alarming in His presence; it was an evil heart that first saw any thing in the creature to be ashamed of, or in the Creator to fear. While we are free from sin, the holy God will be welcome in our every thought, in our most secret places, in every path of duty and pleasure in which we are found. But where guilt is, the footsteps of Jehovah are terrible. To all who have an accusing conscience, the voice of God, whether it speaks in His Word, or in the judgments of His providence, is rending to the heart. While sin is indulged and pollution retained, the omniscient eye is as a consuming fire. And O how many of God's visits are unwelcome even to his people! When in His Word He passes by and searches out their sins, and discovers to them their imperfections, and points them to neglected duties, and sweeps away their false hopes, what murmurs and complaints are heard. Or when He comes to them in some severe trial or affliction, however deserved or needed the discipline, the visitation is apt to be any thing but welcome. And in the event of *death*, what surprise and confusion come upon multitudes! the voice that bids them die, how alarming! What would they not give to live a little longer?

5. The Christian ought ever to be *where he can meet God in judgment without fear.* To Him you must give account of all life's doings; and you know not how soon, nor how suddenly the summons may come for you. Others are dying around you, and passing away from these earthly scenes, and quickly your and my last hour will have come. If you ever repent of your sins and adjust your accounts for the final day, you must do it without delay. If you really mean to die in peace, to secure your eternal interests beyond a peradventure, you must *live* for that hour and end, maintain those habits of daily piety, and that character of holiness, which are the essential prerequisites of the heavenly state. Failing to do this, to how many is the hour of God's judgment the hour of a fearful surprise, a terrible alarm, a withering rebuke! "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity!"

The *Sinner* has a character no less his own—a moral habitation, distinct and defined to the eye of God. "Where art thou?"

Every sinner is *where he ought not to be*—in a false position as it respects God and truth, duty and salvation; and retaining his present character and place, he is sure to be undone forever.

He is in his sins, he has never repented of them, nor forsaken them. They invest him with a character which challenges the abhorrence of God and angels; they tower round his path like

Alpine heights of guilt and corruption; every one of them has a voice which cries to heaven for judgment; and if he is not rid of them, they will sink him into perdition with the weight of a mighty millstone.

He is in the pathway of eternal ruin. His feet take hold on death. He is pursuing a career which ends in destruction. He is rushing with fury in his heart to the doom of the incorrigible. He is defying the wrath, and despising the mercy of the great God. And persisting in this course, he will soon have passed the limits of Divine forbearance, and sealed his eternal doom in hell.

He is in a state of awful condemnation. His sins have already found him out. The penalty of a violated law hangs over him. Conscience foreshadows the coming wrath. The chains of fear, and guilt, and misery are woven by him. Heaven is out against his wickedness. The just and merciful God is against him, and the day of doom and vengeance is not distant.

He wanders in a land of darkness and gloom. Where the sinner is, the sweet light of day never comes; the voice of hope and peace is never heard; the notes of pardoning mercy never break on the ear and rejoice the heart. It is a region of sadness and gloom; the land of the shadow of death. Evil spirits walk it; dismal sounds are heard in it; and death and despair reign over it. The sound that dwells here finds no inward peace; dark thoughts fill the mind, evil passions rage, and all within and around is blight, and dreariness, and wretchedness.

He walks on the brink of the grave, and the next step may be into it. He has no security for his life; he may die the next moment. God is bound by no promise or obligation to keep him alive a single hour; he is unworthy of life, and exists by mere permission of Sovereign Mercy. Death is always at his heels, ready to strike him down the instant leave is given, and diseases lurk in every path to waste and destroy. "Counting on long years to come," flattering his soul with the unction of a future repentance, he may be snatched from life and hope without time to utter one cry for mercy—stand at the bar of eternity in all his unrepented guilt.

The sinner is ever *under God's immediate eye.* He saw the first sinner when he took and ate of the forbidden fruit; He saw all his conduct, and knew all his thoughts during the hours which succeeded the transgression; He saw what fear, and shame, and conscious guilt seized upon him at his approach; and he saw him in his hiding-place, vainly seeking to escape from pursuing Justice. God sees each one of these hearers, sees every sinner in all his ways. He sees him in secret, when he is bold to sin because no visible eye is upon him; and in the night watches, when he hopes the darkness will veil his evil deeds. He sees him in those refuges of lies and false hopes to which he betakes himself, to escape from the truth and from his own honest convictions. He sees him in his family, in the sanctuary, and during the busi-

ness hours of each day; in all his plans of gain and over-reaching, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in his thoughtful hours and in his merry moods, at all times, and in all places, the flaming eye of God is upon him; it reads his most inmost thoughts; it searches his path and knoweth all his goings; it penetrates the profoundest solitudes of his being, and pervades it in its length and breadth as with the light of a thousand suns.

He is in the hands of an angry God. Omnipotence surrounds him, and escape is impossible. He is in the power of Him whose arm spans the universe, and crushes worlds in the day of His wrath. He is at the disposal of One whose every favor has been slighted, whose mercy has been perverted, and whose justice has been insulted; and He will deal with the sinner as He pleases, in strict accordance with the fearful declarations He has made; and no creature shall dare to interfere, none shall be able to deliver from His avenging hand. Let that mighty One, whose authority, and goodness, and wrath, every living sinner practically despises; let Him but utter the word, and the daring worm shall in a moment cease to be. What a position to be in! What a character to maintain! Merciful God! put forth Thy hand, not in wrath to crush, but in mercy to save the creatures whom Thou hast made.

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SERMON CCCCLXXX.

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CHRIST'S GLORY CONTEMPLATED.

"But their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—II. CORINTHIANS, iii. 14, 15, 16, 18.

WHEN Moses descended from the mount, such was the glory of his countenance that the Israelites were unable to look steadily upon it. To accommodate himself to their weaknesses, he put a vail over his face. Upon this incident the apostle seizes, to illustrate the moral blindness of the Jews in his day. As their fathers could not discover clearly the face of Moses, so they were unable to discover the glory of Moses' writings. When they read the Old Testament, they were so blinded by prejudice and the hardness of their hearts, that they understood not its import. But for this moral blindness there was a remedy. All who believed in Christ were enlightened. When the Jews, therefore, turned to the Lord, the vail would be taken away: then would they see distinctly the import of the holy oracles, and grow rapidly in grace. Hence we have the following important truths:

Correct intellectual and moral views of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ are necessary to a full understanding of the Scriptures; and a discovery of the glory, as revealed in this gospel, promotes sanctification.

These are the two points to which I wish to direct your attention.

I. Correct intellectual and moral views of the glory of Christ are necessary to a full understanding of the Scriptures.

By intellectual views, I mean those which pertain to the understanding. The intellect receives the truth, the whole truth respecting the Redeemer. All that is said in relation to His deity and humanity, His person and offices, His dominion and atonement is embraced.

By moral views, I mean those which pertain to the heart, and which may be denominated experimental. It is the mind which perceives the truth, and it is the heart which loves the truth. The former is intellectual, the latter moral; the former is theory, the latter experience. Both are necessary to constitute Christian character. When they co-exist, then the soul becomes savingly acquainted with Jesus; and then also the vail is taken away. The Scriptures being read in such a frame of mind, their glory is perceived. In illustration of this practical truth, we may,

1. Appeal to experience. This argument, I know, will not be felt, in its full force, by those upon whose minds the vail still remains. This, however, is no reason why it should not be employed. Is it not an interesting fact, that when sinners embrace the Saviour, their views of revealed truth become more clear and vivid? And is this strange? If the change be what the Bible represents, a passing from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, we might *expect* such a result. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines *in the heart*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The light, coming from the cross into the heart, passes over upon the pages of revelation, and gilds the whole scene with new beauty. A loveliness, a glory, before undiscovered, now enriches every portion of it. The precepts, promises, and doctrines, are felt to be worthy of God. It is read and admired—it is admired, and read again. Tears of joy bedew its sacred pages. By it the soul is nourished, strengthened, and beautified. How pure is the light which it pours upon the enlightened spirit! When Christ is known in His saving power, then the vail is taken from the heart; and there is a rich preparation for a full discovery of the treasures of wisdom contained in the book of life. "In His light we see light."

2. Our next appeal is to the harmony of Divine truth. It is all holy, and is consequently of the same nature. If, therefore, the mind is darkened in relation to a part of the system which it contains, similar darkness will rest upon the whole: on the contrary, correct views of a part of this system, will give consistency and beauty to the whole. This is true in natural as well as in moral science. When, therefore, the understanding harmonizes with the affections, and when both cleave to the cross of Christ, there is a willingness to acknowledge and receive every fact bearing upon this subject. The whole Bible becomes one vast store-house of instruction. As the truth is loved, so the investigation of its im-

port, richness, and power, is a pleasant employment, and at the same time gives assurance of its reception. When the intellect and the heart are properly enlightened in relation to the person and offices of Christ, there is a certainty that all other truth will be embraced. It cannot be otherwise; for, as truth is harmonious, so the mind which harmonizes with any of its leading principles, must also harmonize with its subordinate parts. In this case, there must be an important and necessary qualification for understanding every portion of the sacred Scriptures.

3. Our last appeal is to the great central truths of revelation. These relate to the person and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ. When these are misunderstood, darkness will rest upon the whole book of God. No part of it will appear clothed with its genuine beauty and consistency. But when the intellect and the heart embrace the Saviour, then the vail is taken away. Nor can this be regarded as unworthy of belief, when you take into consideration the scheme of redeeming mercy, and the plan which Christ crucified holds in this scheme. The scheme itself embraces the entire system of the universe. It is the leading principle in the government of the infinite God—that *for* which nature exists, and without which nature herself is a sealed book. Blot out the work of redemption; and the heavens and the earth, with all the works that are therein, are an unmeaning exhibition of power. Let this work remain, crowning the whole with moral grandeur, and every creature, and every providence, bears marks of surprising wisdom. All things were created by Jesus Christ, and *for* Jesus Christ. It is not from the works of nature, but from the redeemed church, that the manifold wisdom of God is to be made known unto principalities and powers in heavenly places. When you behold Jesus Christ enthroned upon nature as well as upon grace, you then have a correct standard by which to interpret all the works and truth of God. He is to the moral universe what the sun is to the natural. The beams of light come from Him, and are diffused in every direction. Standing at the foot of His cross, the believer occupies an eminence far above the sages of the earth, and having anointed his eyes with eye-salve that he may see, he looks abroad and beholds the works, the providences, and the truth of God, all working together, illustrating each other, and unfolding the Divine glory. Jesus Christ is the great central object of revelation. To Him the types and shadows, the promises and prophecies, have reference. The light which emanates from these various points originates in Him. He reflects light back upon them. Of all the truths of revelation, He is the sum and substance. Their entire use and efficacy depend upon their relation to Him. Of this you have most affecting proof from the Jews. In the Old Testament, of which they are diligent students, there is the substance of all Divine truth. Still they live and walk in midnight

darkness. The reason for this is, that they reject the relation which these truths have to the Lord Jesus Christ. Their beauty is seen only in His face. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Here we are said to "learn the truth as it is in Jesus." "He is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." To be in Him, is to be in the light, and to walk in the light. He is the life of the whole system of revelation. Truths professed, but separated from him, have no living power, no Divine beauty, no spiritual efficacy. Such persons hold the truth in unrighteousness. "Their minds are blinded, for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the scriptures, which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when the word of God is read, the vail is upon their hearts. Nevertheless, when they shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away;" and then shall they see the glory of Jesus Christ. I pass to show,

II. That a contemplation of the glory of Christ as revealed in the gospel promotes sanctification. In prosecuting this part of my subject, it may be proper to observe,

1. That the gospel exhibits the glory of Christ. As the glass reflects the true image of the man, so does the gospel the real character of Jesus. Here, and here only, can be obtained a full discovery of Him, "who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into heaven." The glory of which the apostle speaks in the text, is unquestionably the *moral* glory of Christ; or at least, to this, he principally refers, for into its image the believer is changed. Still even this glory cannot be separated from that which is natural. Deny the natural attributes of God, and how can you explain or understand those which are moral? So it is in relation to the Redeemer. Regard Him as merely human, and however pure or wise, you cannot behold His matchless excellency. Even those moral qualities which you ascribe to Him are exceedingly limited. Infinity and immutability are generally considered as natural attributes of Jehovah, and yet they belong equally to all His moral perfections. By denying this, you change essentially, in your own estimation, His character. If, therefore, in beholding the glory of the Lord, you see only the glory of a *man*, how different the object of your vision from that which filled the mind of the adoring prophet, when he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim, each one had six wings, with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."

But "these things said Esais, when he saw his (Christ's) glory and spoke of him." This was the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

But Christ was glorious in His *incarnation.* This the angels discovered, when they worshipped Him, and sang His praises on the plains of Bethlehem. He was glorious in his *death.* Hence the bold and animated language of Isaiah. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength! I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." He was glorious in his *resurrection and ascension.* In the former he conquered death; in the latter he "led captivity captive." In all things, Jesus was and is glorious.

In the gospel you may behold the glory of His person, of His offices, of His work, and of His character. How irresistible His power, how wonderful His love, how heavenly His patience, how impartial His justice, how conspicuous His grace. He is the proper object of faith, of adoration, and of worship. All power, all wisdom, all the fullness of the Godhead dwell in Him. His glory is the glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Oh, what a strange combination of power and weakness, of riches and poverty, of dignity and depression, do you behold in Him! Yet all is consistent, harmonious, and attractive. He is the chief among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely. His glory is unsearchable, and should command the admiration of men and angels. With what intense delight and subduing reverence then, should sinners look at its rays, as they beam from the manger, the cross, the Mount of Olives, the throne in glory? "Behold the Lamb of God." Contemplate the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Prince of peace, as He is revealed in the gospel.

2. Who behold or discover this glory? Not all the children of men. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." By many He is considered as a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness; and when they see him, there is no beauty in him, why they should desire him. Let it be borne in mind that there is a vast difference between a cold, intellectual assent even to the true character of Christ, and a moral perception of the glory of that character. The former is characteristic of all merely speculative believers; the latter is the experience of every child of faith. The former may be cherished by lost spirits in the world of woe; the latter constitutes the bliss of those who have already commenced the new song before the throne of God and the Lamb. This has a transforming influence. This was the object for which the apostle labored, "counting all things but loss for the excellency of the *knowledge* of Christ Jesus his Lord." His prayer for the Ephesians respected this very object; "That the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the

Father of glory, would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the *knowledge* of Him, the *eyes of their understanding* being enlightened." Those, then, who behold the glory of the Lord are the subjects of spiritual illumination. Though they were once darkness, yet now are they light in the Lord. The vail is taken from their minds, their eyes are opened, the scales have fallen. With open, or unvailed face, they look into the mirror of the gospel. Here they see the glory of their Immanuel, and the brightness of His rays are in proportion to the purity and strength of their vision. The more the heart is sanctified, and the intellect enlarged, the sweeter, the fuller, and the more enrapturing the discoveries.

But these discoveries have also a reflex influence, producing their own image, leaving their own impress. When they shall be unobstructed, then the new creation will be completed. "We shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as He is." Even now, however, every view of Christ loosens the dominion of sin, and gives increasing vigor to the life of holiness. This leads me,

3dly, To show that a discovery of the glory of Christ, as revealed in the Gospel, promotes sanctification. "We all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are *changed into the same image* from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." When Christ Jesus was upon earth, He declared, respecting the Holy Spirit, "He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Here we are taught that the Spirit makes the contemplation of the glory of Christ an effectual means of holiness. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, but in quickening, He shines in the heart, to give the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* We become dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ. But

III. How does a discovery of the glory of the Divine Redeemer promote sanctification?

1. It guards the mind against worldly and vain thoughts. When you are in the presence of some wonderfully grand and sublime object, how completely does it chain the thoughts? It elevates the mind above trifles, and even ordinary objects, though present, are overlooked and forgotten. The shaking of a leaf is unheard amid the rattling of thunders, the glare of lightning, and the rush and roar of winds. The loss of a little property is unfelt, when death makes your house desolate. It is, indeed, an universal law of mind, that great and commanding objects will crowd out attention to those which are of minor importance. Apply this principle to the subject under consideration. The creature is looking at Him whose glory is the fulness of the earth. His mind is completely occupied. It reaches forth to catch still further discoveries of His majesty; and if the brilliancy of the vision be not

overpowering, it will awaken the highest possible degree of attention. When Paul was caught up into the third heavens, and saw and heard things which it was impossible for a man to utter, he was so occupied with the august scene, that even the things which distinguish life from death, time from eternity, had no place in his mind. When lifted up to the seat of Divine Glory, the place where Christ dwells at the right hand of the Father, having in subjection all the principalities and powers, he could not tell whether he was in the body, or out of the body. Let the rays of this vision, though in fainter glory, fall upon your minds, and where, where could worldly and vain thoughts find a lodging-place? It would burn them up root and branch. When the soul, that living temple of yours, is filled with Divine glory, other objects must be displaced, and you yourselves changed into the same image from glory to glory.

2. A perception of the glory of the Lord promotes love. You will bear in mind that a perception of this glory is a moral exercise, and cannot, therefore, differ from love in its purest, liveliest form. To behold the glory of God, and to love God, are synonymous phrases. The wicked may, indeed, see *God*, but they are never said, in the Bible, to behold the glory of God. To them God is a dreadful, terrible, but not a glorious, lovely being. His glory can be seen only by those who bear His image. "Every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." When the heart is in harmony with His truth, and with all His adorable perfections, then, and not till then, do you behold His real excellency. Then, also, will you desire to be like him. When the Lord God manifests Himself to you as He does not to the world, how sweetly, how effectually are all the powers of the soul brought into subjection to His will? The reflected image of your Master brightens daily upon your heart. Never is the process of sanctification going on more rapidly, never are you dying unto sin so efficaciously, never are you rising so swiftly into the stature of perfect ones in Christ Jesus. Would any of you be transformed by the renewing of your minds? Come to the place where His glory will pour down its softening, its reconciling beams upon your souls. Here you will *see* that God is love; and you will *feel*, too, the live-giving effect of the vision. Here love, which is the fulfilling of the law, will supplant every unhallowed passion, break down the dominion of sin, and fix its heavenly impress upon the heart. Here you will be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Then, also, will you abound in every good word and work; for rich, exceedingly rich and various are the fruits of love. "And this I pray that your *love* may abound more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and

without offence till the day of Jesus Christ, *being filled with all the fruits of righteousness*, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God."

8. A contemplation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Gospel, promotes patience, peace, and heavenly mindedness.

In the midst of disappointments, conflicts, and abuses, patience will find appropriate employment. "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Peace, also, that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, that peace which passeth all understanding, is a blessing for which you will often pant. This is not your rest. Here you shall have tribulation. How desirable, then, that you should have a foretaste of the rest that remaineth; that heavenly consolations should comfort, strengthen and encourage your hearts. And in this world of worldliness, where every one is mad upon his idols, where the thoughts and affections are set on things on the earth, how desirable and necessary that the spell should be broken; that the heart should rise in freedom to nobler objects; that heaven should be the home of the mind, the place towards which the thoughts lead, and where they fix themselves in quietness and supreme delight? And how can these graces of the Spirit, patience, peace, and a mind fed on heavenly things, be so effectually learned, as by a contemplation of the glory of the Lord?

> "Had I a glance of thee, my God,
> Kingdoms and men would vanish soon."

This is light in darkness, joy in sorrow, heaven upon earth. Oh, come then with unvailed face, and behold the glory of the Lord. Look at this great sight. It will transform, renew and sanctify; it will change you into the same image from glory to glory.

REFLECTIONS.

1. If correct views of the glory of Christ are necessary to a full understanding of the Scriptures, then those who have incorrect views of this glory, cannot be regarded as safe interpreters of the Bible.

They err respecting a cardinal truth, an essential principle; a principle which lies at the foundation of the entire system of revelation. If they are consistent with themselves, their error here must modify all their future investigations. Would that man be a safe guide in natural philosophy, who should assume it as a fact, that the sun made his daily revolutions round the earth; or, who should deny the existence of such a law as gravitation? His errors are not trifling, but cardinal. Whatever may be the strength

of his mental powers, or the charms of his eloquence, he begins in error, and in error he must end. The true theory of the solar system he cannot teach; the laws by which it is governed he does not understand; he perverts them, and introduces others which have no existence, except in his darkened and bewildered mind. Of course, all his instructions must be false. Now apply these remarks to the subject we are considering. Jesus Christ is the sun of the moral system; His offices the great influential and attractive principle in this system. How can the man who misunderstands their cardinal truths, correctly and clearly explain other truths belonging to the same system? Such an individual, like a man walking in the night, stumbles because there is no light in him. He stumbles at that stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and then he goes on to stumble, and stumble at the whole word, being disobedient. He is blind, and if he lead the blind, how fearful will be the end of both?

2. This subject shows us the importance of being well established in the cardinal truths of the gospel.

This is a shield from error. The man who has a few first principles in any science, well established, is in little danger of wandering. They are fixed points, to which he can look, and by which he may guide all his footsteps. A similar guide to all his investigations, is within the reach of that man who understands and loves the distinguishing doctrines of the cross. Be established, then, in these truths. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.

3. We learn from this subject that the perfection of saints in glory, consists in their being like their Divine Lord.

To form them into His image, He died, rose again, ascended up on high, and governs all things. To form them into His image, He revealed His word, and appointed the ministry of reconciliation. To form them into His image, the Spirit takes up His abode in their hearts. This is the last finish of beauty which their souls can receive; the fullest preparation for enjoyment which they can acquire; the highest degree of exaltation to which they can be raised. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be *like* Him." How sweet the rest of saints in the presence of their Divine Lord! There they are, clothed in white; all tears wiped from their eyes, crowned with glory, bowing before the throne, partaking of the joy of their Lord; He in them, and they in Him. And so shall they ever be with the Lord. May we but rise to that blissful state, and we ask no more. Amen, and amen.

SERMON CCCCLXXXI.

BY REV. SAMUEL IRENÆUS PRIME,
New York.

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore."

REVELATION, i. 18.

THE resurrection of Christ had a prominence in the instructions of the primitive Church, which it has not in modern times. Then it was a doctrine, now it is only an historical fact. Then it was the central truth of Christianity, now it is believed but not honored as the life of the system. "Our preaching is vain, and your faith also is vain," said Paul, if Christ be not risen. To restore this doctrine to its appropriate rank among the truths of the Gospel, to discover the vital relation it bears to all that man is to believe, to comprehend the power of testimony concentrated in this event to the verity of the Divine revelation, and to feel the strength of motive to be developed for the believer's hope, we have only to open the New Testament and study the writings of the apostles with an eye to this doctrine, and its grandeur and importance rise, as we proceed, till the evidence is irresistible that this is a cardinal truth of the Christian system, and the confirmation of all the rest. As in a chain of circumstantial evidence, often more conclusive than the most luminous testimony of eye-witnesses, there is one link that fastens all the rest to the great fact to be proved; so the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fact that binds His system to the faith of man; if this is believed, the whole is received; if doubted, our faith is vain: we are yet in our sins.

The nature of the subjects proposed for discussion this evening, renders it impossible to do more than to present a skeleton of thought. This would have been true had my time been limited to a single topic; but if we attempt the contemplation of both the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, we shall find the evening far spent while we are yet at the portals of our theme. It will, therefore, be my aim to seize upon a few points of interest in this portion of our Saviour's history, and invite your minds to their pious

study, as we come to see where the Lord lay, and whence He ascended to His Father.

1. The narrative of the resurrection as recorded by the four evangelists, presents several apparent discrepancies, the most of which are readily reconciled, and none of them are sufficiently serious to shake the credibility of the record.

The attentive reader of the Gospels will perceive that the accounts differ—First, as to the number of women who came to the sepulchre. Matthew mentions two; Mark, three; Luke three and others with them; while John names Mary Magdalene only. This disagreement vanishes when you bear in mind that those who name but one or two of the women present, do not deny that others were with them, and thus each of the accounts is consistent with the rest, and all of them with each other.

Secondly, the earthquake, the descent of the angel, etc., are mentioned by Matthew, after the arrival of the women at the sepulchre, while it would be inferred from a perusal of the other evangelists that these events occurred before. Such is probably the fact, and there is nothing in Matthew's account to conflict with that opinion. He mentions the same facts with the other historians, and the difference in his arrangement of the facts brings him and them into no collision.

But, thirdly, we are met with a real discrepancy, the removal of which has employed the minds of learned and able men. The four evangelists agree in saying that the women came "very early," to the sepulchre. Matthew has it thus, "as it began to dawn;" Luke says, "very early in the morning;" John says, "when it was yet dark." But Mark, in addition to saying that it was very early, states that it was "at the rising of the sun." Here is the discrepancy. How could it be sunrise while it was yet dark? And in the original, the difficulty is greater, the word rendered "rising" being in the past tense, plainly signifying an hour of the morning so far advanced that the light of the sun was visible. Hengstenberg, Michaelis, and Robinson explain this apparent difficulty by regarding the expression as indicating that the sun was so far advanced in rising that the morning dawn was proceeding from it, although it is not yet visible above the horizon. Robinson cites several instances from the Old Testament of such a use of the phrase, and there would be no objection to this explanation if we were not assured by John that it was yet dark. To account for this diversity, I suggest the following views. It is reasonable to infer from Mark's account, that the women arrived at the sepulchre so early that it would be impracticable to proceed immediately in the mournful service which they had come to perform. Their sorrow after the death of the Lord had doubtless made sleep a stranger to their eyelids, and now, anticipating the day, they have sought the tomb. Arriving ere it was light enough

to think of entering the sepulchre, they sit down to weep and pray together before they approach the pallid corpse of the man of sorrows, and take His hallowed limbs in their trembling hands. They waited there till the rising of the sun, and then finding the stone rolled away they entered, and behold the Saviour was risen. Now let us read the narratives in harmony; and that the explanation proposed may be more obvious, let us first read it as it must be read, according to the view of critics.

The Common Reading.	*The Proposed Harmony.*
"And very early in the morning, as it began to dawn, toward the first day of the week, at the rising of the sun, while it was yet dark, they came unto the sepulchre."	"And very early in the morning, as it began to dawn, towards the first day of the week, while it was yet dark, they came unto the sepulchre. And at the rising of the sun they said among themselves, who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre; and when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great."
The contradiction is apparent when the passage is thus read. But the following beautiful and consistent narrative appears, when the view now suggested is introduced. The narrative in harmony will then read as follows:	

The only objection to this harmony will arise in the mind of the English reader of the New Testament from the division of the text into verses and from the punctuation, neither of which is sufficient to constitute any valid objection to the view.

Without pausing to notice those objections to the narrative made by captious critics, of which a ready solution is furnished by any commentary within reach, let us look at.

2. The *nature* of Christ's resurrection body. There is not a word in the histories before us, nor in the Word of God, to call in question the simple and obvious view which every unprejudiced reader would obtain, that the same body which was nailed to the tree arose on the third day. This fact is as clearly taught, as that Christ came into the world to save sinners. If the language employed in the narrative was designed to teach any other doctrine, we may reject all confidence, not in the sacred Scriptures only, but in all history; and not in history only, but in all language as a medium of thought. God had failed in making Himself intelligible to His creatures, if His words do not mean that the slain body of Jesus came to life. And to my knowledge there has been, in our day, but a single attempt to impeach this truth; and, so far as I know, its author is almost its only believer. He would not stand on the rock of truth, and the rock fell on him and ground him to powder.

We believe with the disciples — with the doubting Thomas whose sight restored his trembling faith—that the Lamb that was

slain was raised again; a veritable body of flesh and blood, the same that lived and bled. It is an effort of faith far less to receive this doctrine, than to believe the theories of conceited philosophy or the dreams of disordered intellect.

3. The event itself. That was sublimity unrivalled, when the great Creator stood in the midst of the silent universe, filled only by His eternal presence, and spoke into being worlds that were not. But in the tomb of Jesus is displayed the energy of self-existence, the nature of eternal being, a mystery which the finite fails to grasp. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again:" John x. 18. He died; the soul that dwelt in His mortal flesh had winged its way to its native sky; His mangled corpse had been laid by tender hands in the solitary tomb, to sleep till the morn of a distant and eternal day should pierce with light the darkest grave. The tomb of Jesus had been closed and sealed. A Roman band had been set to guard the slumbers of Him whom angels watched with eyes that never sleep. Beneath that stone is laid the form of the Lord of glory. Mourn for Him, ye who trusted it had been He who should redeem Israel; go, mourn for Him—the promises have failed.

Night settles on Jerusalem. The Sabbath follows, while the God of Redemption rests on the field of His conflict, as of old the God of Creation held a Sabbath when His work was done. Another night has passed and the Lord of Life awakes; He rises from His couch of state; He stands erect in the darkness and solitude of that hall of death; ministering spirits enter; disrobe His animated form of the garments of the grave, clothe Him afresh; and the risen Redeemer walks forth a living God! I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.

The heart of the Christian world regards the *death* of Christ as the most august event in the world's history; and justly when we view the great end for which He came. Christ, the Son of God, became man to die. The work of atonement, in which the suffering of the holy was accepted as a glorious substitute for the death of the sinner was indeed completed, when the Saviour bowed His head; and with this awful truth alone in view, we may stand still before the cross, and cry with Him upon it: "It is finished." But we must not forget that the future glory of Him who thus treads the wine-press alone is to be revealed in the triumphant victory over death of him in whose arms he now expires. With this object before us, we must look to the RESURRECTION of Christ and find the testimony it bears to the character and design of His mission.

1. By His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ was declared to be the Son of God.

In the introduction of his great argument to the Romans, Paul speaks of Jesus Christ, "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection

from the dead:" Rom. i. 4. In the beginning was the Word, and long before the world was, He rejoiced in the bosom of the Father. "When He bringeth in His first-begotten into the world, He saith: And let all the angels of God worship Him." Thus from eternity He was the Son of God, and from the incarnation in Bethlehem, God-man.

But now in a higher sense, the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Paul applies the language once breathed on the lips of David, and saith: "God hath raised up Jesus again, as it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." The resurrection from the grave, was the birth-day of the Son of God. The Father owned Him in the face of the world, and they who believe that Jesus rose from the dead, *and they only*, believe that He is the MESSIAH.

To assail the literal resurrection of the crucified body of Christ, is to attack the Messiahship of Jesus. If He rose not, He was not the Son of God.

2. There is a cardinal doctrine of grace involved in the resurrection of Christ.

To complete the number of witnesses, and prepare the way for a new mission to go forth into the world with this event, as the distinctive article of the Christian faith; it is declared Acts i. 22, after the apostacy of Judas, "One must be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." With this fact as their watchword they went out and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. Acts iv. 2. It was soon said of them as in Acts iv. 33, "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." To comprehend this truth and feel its power was the loftiest desire of the chief apostle, as he declares in his letter to the Philippians, i. 8—10; "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; that I may know him and *the power of his resurrection*, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death: if by any means I might *attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*" There is a hidden, but to the believer, a living glorious mystery in these words: they are not readily intelligible from the fact already stated, that the resurrection of Christ has lost its place in the Christian system. In Rom. vi. 4, it is written, "as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life;" and Peter saith, i. 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, *hath begotten us again* unto a lively hope *by the resurrection* of Jesus Christ from the dead." In such wonderful words, the believer finds the evidence that this doctrine is identified with all the hopes of the gospel, and is itself the sealing witness of its power. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." 1 Cor. xv. 14.

The idea of justification through the resurrection of Christ is seldom presented in the preaching of the gospel, but is clearly the thought of the apostle and the teaching of the Spirit in that memorable passage, Rom. viii. 35; "He was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification." In His death the curse of the violated law is seen resting on the head of the guilty, crushed beneath its sentence; the infinite demerit of sin is illustrious in the sight of the cross, while vengeance feels its strength, and justice triumphs in the victim's death. The law is magnified; God is honored; His throne is radiant with truth fulfilled in the death of Him who bears the sinner's curse. *But where is the sinner?* How shall he be delivered? His Redeemer is slain; the grave has swallowed his hopes; death spreads his pall over the world in sin, and man must feel forever the wrath of unsatisfied justice, with no mediator, no redeemer. At this point, the connection of Christ's resurrection with the sinner's justification appears. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, RATHER (mark the force of that word *rather*) that is risen again, who is ever at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." The work of redemption would have been incomplete, had not the great High Priest, when He offered Himself once for all, then passed into the heavens, there (in the presence of the throne, whose law His death had sustained) to make everlasting intercession for the justification of them who should believe on His name. Penitence weeps at the foot of the cross, over sin that nailed the Saviour there; but faith fastens its eye on the living Lamb in the midst of the Father's throne, and rejoices in the hope of pardon and eternal life.

3. The resurrection of Christ is the pledge of our own. "Because I live, ye shall live also." John xiv. 19. I will enter the prison-house of death and bind the strong man that he may not have power on you. I will walk through the dark valley and ye shall fear no evil.

"We have testified of God," said Paul, "that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." As we then stand around the sepulchre of Christ, to be witnesses by faith of His resurrection, we also behold the emblem of that great uprising when all those who sleep in Jesus shall be raised in His image, and be glorified with him in his Father's kingdom "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." So, when the believer lies down to die, or when he consigns to the lonely tomb the form of one he

loves, in the assurance of Christ, and the fact that *He rose* from the dead to give life to them who sleep, he beholds by joyful faith the predicted time when many that sleep in dust shall wake in glory, when the sea shall give up its dead, the earth shall render back its trust, the very ground on which we tread shall live; and from every kingdom and people under heaven, from the sunny tropics and the icy north, from the islands and the hill-tops, the race of man, over whose silent sleep the night of ten thousand ages may have hung, shall start at the trumpet's sound, and rush into life immortal.

> "When the great archangel shakes the creation,
> Tears the strong pillars of the vault of heaven,
> Breaks up old marble, the repose of princes,"

bone to its bone, the scattered fragments of a buried world, the generations of a thousand centuries spring to their own, and they who have done good are caught up with the Lord into the air; "*and so shall they be ever with the Lord.*"

The appearance of the Saviour, and his ascension, now demand our attention.

It was fitting that the Lord should first appear to those pious women who were "last at his cross and earliest at his grave." They fled with amazement when they found the tomb was spoiled; and the Saviour met them in the way and said "All hail." Mary Magdalene wept in the garden, and a stranger said to her, "Mary," and the truth broke on her enraptured soul; it was her risen Lord.

Two disciples were walking in the country, and their hearts burned within them as Jesus opened to them the Scriptures.

The eleven were sitting at meat when the Saviour stood in the midst of them; and again He appears to the same sad company with Thomas, that the doubting disciple might place his hand in the nail and spear wounds.

Again He meets seven by the sea of Tiberias, and gives the command which is the Sabbath-school teacher's commission; which makes every teacher a successor of Peter, with far more truthfulness in the claim than the "Man of Sin" can boast, a command that should be written on the walls of every Sunday-school room and the walls of every Christian heart; a simple precept, but Christ-like, O hear it and heed it, "FEED MY LAMBS."

After that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; and finally He meets His disciples and leads them out to the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, to the village of Bethany, a spot that He loved, and then lifting up His hands He blessed them, and while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

The ascension of Christ, thus simply but beautifully described

by the inspired pencil, was, in the first place, *an act of triumph.* It was the return of a conquering God to His palace in the skies. The heaven-lighted eye of the prophet Daniel, piercing the gloom of six hundred years, beheld this scene, and the rapt seer thus sang the triumph of his future Lord. "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before Him. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away."

Having wrestled with principalities and powers, and vanquished death and the grave; having paved a passage from a world of sin and shame to one of light and glory, He now ascends to the right hand of the majesty on high. He takes the mediatorial throne, and reigns a Prince and Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins.

In the *second* place, the ascension was an emphatic declaration that the Saviour's work on earth was done. His resurrection and appearance were essential to the completion of His plan of redemption; but now when the testament has been sealed, the testator is ready to depart. Hear his prayer: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me *with thine own self,* with the glory which *I had with thee* before the world was. And now I come to thee." John xvii. 5, 6, 13. These were His own words, as the hour of His passion drew nigh, and when the agonies of death were past, and the chariots of heaven stood waiting to bear the conqueror home; He is ready to ascend "with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength."

Lastly, the Saviour rose that the Holy Spirit might descend. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I go away, I will send him unto you." John xvi. 7. A precious ascension gift! The Spirit to convince of sin, to apply the blood of atonement, to sanctify the heart, and bring the sinner home to God. "I will not leave you comfortless," was His own kind promise to His disciples; and when He entered on His kingdom He sent the Spirit, and the heavenly messenger wings his way to their sad hearts with words of peace.

But to these startled disciples this parting was one of unmingled pain; their present bereavement, not their future joy, was the overpowering thought of that strange hour. Their loss they saw—not heaven's gain, not their own in the coming glory of the church and of Christ. They saw their master slowly ascending; the God revealed in his ethereal form; when suddenly the truth flashed on their bewildered minds, that the Son is on the wing for His Father's house. He speaks not, but hovering over them as they turn upward their mournful eyes and speechless gaze upon their rising

Lord, He smiles the last adieu; and a cloud more lustrous than the rainbow about the throne, receives the King of Glory on its bosom, and floats away into the deep blue sky.

On the plains of Bethlehem, while shepherds watched their flocks by night, the music of angels stole from the choirs of heaven, and in the midst of melody, such only as angels make in hymns to Jesus, the Saviour's advent was chanted in the ears of men. And now the Redeemer has gone, what mean those strains of triumphant song that roll along the skies? It is a jubilee in heaven! *Onward*, UPWARD rides the conqueror with glory flaming from His burning wheels. Attendant angels scatter crowns more radiant than stars in His ascending path. Worlds that never heard the story of redeeming love, stand still to see the victorious pageant on its shining way.

And now arrived at last, ten thousand times ten thousand voices cry, "LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, O YE GATES, AND BE YE LIFTED UP YE EVERLASTING DOORS, AND THE KING OF GLORY SHALL COME IN!"

And from within as many voices, "WHO IS THIS KING OF GLORY?"

And the shining escort answer, "*The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the* KING OF GLORY *shall come in!!!*"

Take thy throne and crown, O thou most mighty! thou whose highest glory is that thou art mighty to save! Angels shall bow before thee, archangels shall kiss thy feet, and a multitude, whom no man can number, redeemed by thy shed blood, shall sing, world without end, "*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.*"

There, in the centre of the concentrated glories of the celestial city, in the midst of light that mortals may not look on, girt with ranks of saints and angels in a holy strife to swell still higher the overflowing fountains of love that gush from every breast; there, with the sceptre of a love-conquered world in His hands, and millions of redeemed and rejoicing ones at His feet,

There, the dear Man, my Saviour sits,
The God! how bright he shines;
And scatters infinite delights,
On all the happy minds.

Jesus, the Lord, their harps employs,
Jesus, my love, they sing,
Jesus, the name of both our joys,
Sounds sweet from every string.

Now let me rise and join their song,
And be an angel too;
My heart, my hands, my ears, my tongue,
Here's joyful work for you.

I would begin the music here,
And so my soul should rise;
O for some heavenly notes, to bear
My spirit to the skies.

My brethren, why stand ye gazing up into heaven. This same Jesus shall *so* come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. Ye shall see Him again when He comes in the clouds of His glory and his holy angels with him. Every eye shall see Him when He comes to judgment! Would you see him now? Hark to His voice! "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If *any* man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me." "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

But in the strong emotions awakened by these themes, let us not forget the practical effect of the doctrine involved. "That I may know the power of his resurrection," was Paul's great desire —its power in revealing the divinity and glory of Jesus, in pledging the future triumph of the church over the terrors of death and the grave—its power in sustaining through sufferings, by which he has fellowship with Christ. Why do we know and feel so little of the power of the resurrection? Because we do not study it. Every other event in the life of Jesus, His birth, His temptation, His miracles, His trial, His agony, His death, are themes on which the church has dwelt till they form a part of the soul's experience of the Christian; these are Christ in him, and his experience is their power. The love of Christ constraineth them; but they love Him in his humiliation. Those nights of prayer, those days of darkness, those drops of sweat, those dying groans, have power to stir the heart. But the rising Saviour, the ascending Saviour, the glorified Saviour, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, the intercessor, the ever-living Priest and King. This is the Saviour whose power we need to justify us sinners in the sight of God, to fit us, fire us, and rouse us for the work unto which we are called. The pages of the inspired volume furnish us no themes more full of instruction, of elevation, of impulse to holy living and noble doing, than the resurrection and ascension of our Lord. The apostles, the martyrs, the holiest men have pondered them devoutly, and have drawn lessons rich and sweet from the deserted tomb and the mount of triumph. Before leaving the subject, I would love to ask you to commune with Paul and Chrysostom, with Thomas Aquinas and Pascal, and others whose pious musings around these sacred scenes are among the most fragrant records in the church of Christ. But time has failed me.

Let us know the power of the resurrection, and so live that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also may appear with Him in glory. Soon shall we hear Him say, "Come up hith-

er, and sit down with me in my Father's kingdom." O to think of heaven and Jesus, Jesus and heaven! of bowing before Him, of casting crowns at His feet, of singing, "Unto him who hath loved us, and given himself for us, and washed us in his own blood, *unto His name* BE GLORY."

"O may I bear some humble part
In that immortal song,
Wonder and love shall tune my heart,
And joy command my tongue."

SERMON FOR THE YOUNG.

LIFE—A CONTRAST.

"Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day."

NOT many years since I was called to minister at the death-bed of two young men. They were both at that interesting period of life when youth is just opening into manhood and giving promise of a bright and joyous future. They moved in the same circle of society, sickened and died nearly at the same time. They were both of them greatly admired for their amiable qualities and social virtues while living, and they were sincerely and universally lamented in death. They were in many respects alike; and yet in the end an affecting and instructive *contrast* was made so clear and plain, as to be seen and marked by a whole community. The one was a man of study, and the other of business.

The former, two years previous to the time referred to, had graduated with no little honor at one of the first colleges of New England. The impress of intellect and of manly beauty was upon his brow, and the fire of genius flashed in his eye. His mind was gifted and well cultivated. He set his mark high, and no toil or striving was omitted in order to reach it. He was ambitious and studious. His ruling passion was success in the profession which he had chosen; all things else were made subsidiary to this end; his plans for life were laid, and all was hope and expectation as he pressed forward to win the prize—when, lo! from a cloudless sky a thunderbolt suddenly descended and struck him down. That DEATH which he had put a great way off in his thoughts, and

which he had left out of his plans altogether, had unexpectedly overtaken him in the race: paleness and trembling came upon him; he strove against the stern mandate with all the energy of hope and determined resolution—for die he could not and would not—and yet he had to yield and give up the smiling world, and die.

Oh! the anguish of that youthful heart as hope expired and a mortal darkness gathered in his chamber, and the bitter cup of death was forced to his lips! I will not paint the scene—it was trying to witness it. Touched with a sympathy deeper than I had ever felt before for a fellow-sinner and entreated by his distant parents, I kindly and earnestly spoke to him of Jesus Christ and His salvation—of the Christian race and crown—of a life above which knows no blight,—and urged him, day by day, as the sands of life fast ebbed away, to make his peace with God and prepare to die, but to little purpose. He frankly confessed that he felt no present interest in religious things; he was unwilling to converse about them; and death especially was a subject that he could not have alluded to, even in his sick chamber, so greatly did it disturb and displease him. Many tears were wept for him by Christian friend, and prayers offered in secret; but there was no marked change in him to the last, and he died without a word to comfort his weeping friends.

And that young man was no unbeliever or scoffer. A pious mother had blessed him in childhood; and during his sickness, though far away, she retired to a grove and there with daily pleadings and tears, prayed for the salvation of her dying son. While in college, too, he came under the influence of a powerful revival of religion; many of his associates were converted; he himself was greatly wrought upon, and for a year or more was serious and prayerful. He was also a strictly moral and virtuous youth—as much so as the young ruler who came to Jesus—and the pride of a circle of friends and associates. But he had *lived only for this world*—he had no interest in the world to come. His habits of mind were fixed—his character was formed; he had made his choice, and the inevitable and fearful issue was at hand.

I saw him *die*, surrounded by a terror-stricken group of young associates—on a bright mild Spring day when nature around was starting into new life and putting on her green robe of beauty—smitten in the hour of fondest hope and promise; that child of many prayers—that youth of rare promise and brilliant expectation and once serious and inquiring mind, with no prayer on his lips, no words of hope or resignation expressed, mute and trembling he passed away. Of what avail, thought I, as with his weeping companions I bowed by that bed-side, and tried to commend that departing soul to the mercy of God—of what avail in that hour was all that he had sought and attained to? his fair

It is also plainly implied in the language of prophecy concerning the progress of Christianity, and in the teachings of the New Testament on the effects of Christian living in the conversion of men. Can I propose to myself a more important object on the present occasion* than that of showing the way in which the disciples of Christ will be prepared to accomplish the work which he has committed to them. It is the will of Christ that His kingdom shall extend by the instrumentality of those already made its subjects. This is evident from His own instructions, from the constitution of the church soon after His ascension, from its early history and the means by which its rapid extension was at first promoted, and also from the direct and earnest language in which the apostles repeatedly enforced the obligations of the churches to hold forth the word of life, and to strive together for the furtherance of the Gospel. These obligations did not grow out of any thing peculiar to Christianity then which does not now belong to it. Its spirit, laws, and designs, are still the same. Neither did they arise from anything peculiar in the state of the world. A large portion of it, now as then, is filled with error and wickedness. They are the obligations of the church which Christ redeemed by His blood, planted in the world for which He died to spread abroad the light and love of the cross. The constitution of the church and its relations to the world indicate the same obligations. It is then a momentous question—In what consists the strength of the church for doing this great work? What is the element of that effective energy by which God has determined to fill the earth with light and holiness? I propose to direct your attention to that single thing, without which, we have reason to believe, the church will never fulfil the commission, Go ye therefore and teach all nations,—I mean, a large measure of the spirit of Christ. In doing this, *I shall illustrate the connection between the piety of the church and its efficiency and success in extending the Gospel in the world.*

I. That agency in its various forms which is required for the extension of the Gospel, is directly connected with the piety of the church. The appropriate agency in this enterprise must have its source in a deep conviction of the lost condition of men; and the sensibility to this truth will be in proportion to the degree of the spirit of Christ in His disciples. It is not enough to look at man in his temporal relations, a member of the human family, with rights as a social being and a subject of government, and capable of intellectual improvement. When deprived of these rights and privileges, his condition will appeal to the common sympathies of our nature. These sympathies will be awakened when he is robbed of the dignity and prerogatives of a man, and of the bless-

* Preached in the Second Presbyterian Church, Newark, at the recent ordination of E. M. Dodd and Oliver Crane, as Missionaries to Turkey.—Ed.

ings of social and domestic life. But in these features of his lot we have not reached the radical elements of his wretchedness; and if they excite nothing more than our natural sympathies, we have no sufficient basis for such an enterprise as is necessary for the salvation of our world. The real misery of man lies deeper than these outward circumstances. It consists in his estrangement from God as a sinner, his moral corruption, his degrading superstitions and deeply rooted errors, from which he is passing every hour unblessed to his final doom. He cannot be recovered except by that remedy, found alone in the Gospel of Christ, which will reach the heart of his corruption and ruin. All appliances will be in vain which are not made with direct reference to his character and destiny as a sinner and an immortal being. This is the basis on which the missionary enterprise rests—man is lost, degraded, cursed in his sins; we must give him the Gospel, for nothing else will save him.

Now what is the spirit that will embrace and sustain such an enterprise? To what do the wants of man, thus ruined and exposed to the wrath of God make their appeal? They do not successfully address the ordinary principles of our nature—our native generosity, our common sensibility to suffering, or our love of enterprise and achievement. A mere common philanthropy cannot be relied on to select and sustain the instrumentality requisite to meet these wants: Neither is it the fruit of political ambition, of national pride, of the spirit of commerce or of conquest. These necessities of man effectually appeal only to the heart deeply moved with the evil and consequences of sin, with the love of Christ and the claims of the glory of God. Without such emotions we may be prompted to do some things desirable and necessary for the extension of Christ's kingdom when opportunity is offered. But the hand and heart, warm, earnest, and liberal, will not be consecrated to the work. With a large measure of the love of Christ, and of sympathy with Him, there is such a capacity to feel the spiritual necessities of man, and the obligation to supply them, as will secure the needed effort. But if there is little of this devotion, if the selfish and worldly spirit prevail, the "mind to work" will be wanting, and the cry of the perishing millions for help will fall upon the ear with little effect. We derive a strong argument for this work from the command and the example of Christ. But the power of Divine authority and example over the mind will not be great where little of the spirit of Christ is found. The mind that surveys the field of wretchedness and ruin in this world, with but little sensibility, will not be deeply impressed with the Divine requirements on this subject.

When we look at the nature of the instrumentality demanded in the cause of missions, we discern more plainly its immediate connection with the piety of the church. It is of such a kind, that

a formal religion, a cold selfish spirit, will never put it forth. The *men* who shall go into the field of labor constitute an important part of that instrumentality. And what is the influence that will enlist our young men in the missionary enterprise? What is it that will lead them to choose their homes, and often early graves, in dark and distant lands? The work of preaching the Gospel to the benighted heathen, is not attended with the attractions of worldly gain and distinction. It has only those attractions which love to Christ can appreciate—hard toil and much sacrifice in making known the Saviour amid reigning ignorance and corruption. The terms of service propounded to the foreign missionary, are substantially those propounded by Wesley to Whitefield, when he invited him to enter a field of arduous labor: "You shall have bread to eat, raiment to put on, a house wherein to lay your head, and a crown that fadeth not away." He is called to an engagement in which the laurels to be gained are not those of earth, but of heaven. The victories to be achieved will not be hailed by human plaudits. The voices of an admiring world will not cheer him on in the great moral conflict. Nothing but a large endowment of the spirit of his Master, can fit him to enter it or sustain him in it. He must have much of that love to the souls of men, and that forgetfulness of self, which will make him willing to spend his life in any land, however dark, in efforts however difficult, to bring lost sinners to the cross.

It may be said that the consecration of men to this work depends very much on the influences under which they are brought in our literary and theological institutions. There is doubtless some foundation for this remark. The promotion of piety in our seminaries of learning, may well be an object of earnest solicitude. Precious is the baptism of the Spirit which has sometimes been enjoyed there; the cause of Christ at home and abroad has reaped the blessed fruit. Around these institutions Christian sympathy will gather, so long as the cultivation of the heart in the exercises of humble piety is kept uppermost. But we are to remember that such is the connection between them and the churches, that the spirit of devotion existing there will generally correspond with the tone of piety around them. Our young men preparing for the ministry, are from the bosom of the church; and what the churches over the land are, in the type of their piety and their devotion to the cause of missions, *they* are likely to be. Besides, if men in sufficient numbers are prepared for this work, must we not look to the piety of Christian parents, who, having first given their children to Christ, will educate them according to the spirit and import of a dedication. Only under the strong influence of the love of Christ do they estimate this as an obligation and a privilege. It is only when this principle is powerfully present in all *their* plans and purposes, that parents are directly instrumental in

training their children for self-denial in doing good. Without this, worldly hopes and prospects are likely to affect their characters, even when they are Christians, far more than is consistent with the claims of their master. Few of them will be so converted to the sympathies of Christ, that they will hold themselves ready to do all that He bids them, and to go wherever He sends them. In one word, if the heart of the church has feeble beatings in sympathy with a dying world, her sons nourished in her bosom will have little sense of obligation to be employed in spreading the Gospel in dark lands. The church is in such a sense, the mother of missions, that she is to nurture her children for the work. But she will have few to give to it, if she is not deeply imbued with the spirit of Christ.

The *consecration of property* to this cause, another part of the necessary instrumentality, is essentially connected with the piety of the church. As we draw nearer to the time when the triumphs of the cross shall become universal in the earth, we shall witness a great advancement in such consecration. It is plain from the work to be done in giving the Gospel to the nations, that the property of the church must be employed in a greatly augmented degree. Operations are now seriously embarrassed because the money is wanting to sustain them. The cause of missions is now, and has been for some years past in such a position, as to make the question one of immediate and solemn interest,—what is it, that will bring the people of God to meet their responsibility in the consecration of their property to the cause of missions? What will lead them to seek it and love it as an instrument of doing good and honoring their Lord who lends it to them? What will root out their covetousness, so that they will cheerfully bring their money and lay it with themselves on God's altar? This they profess and promise to do, but what shall make it a practical reality? What, but a high-toned, all-controlling Christian principle? What, but such a prevalent power of the love of Christ as shall identify them with Him and the object for which He died? Then they will regard their worldly treasures as given them to be employed in extending His kingdom. We may still point as we have done to the systematic demand made on the property of the church under the ancient dispensation; we may demonstrate the fact with every form of argument, that this is a part of the Christian economy; we may illustrate a thousand times over, the command to give and the blessedness of giving, and we shall draw out the treasures of the church in the same stinted measure, till under the influence of holy love, this principle—we are not our own, our property is not our own but Christ's, shall rule in the hearts of His people. Then their gifts will be made, not simply because they cannot escape the call, but because they appreciate

the claim of their Saviour, with whose love to a perishing world their hearts beat in warm sympathy.

Another means for the conversion of the world which illustrates the point before us, is *prayer*. This lies at the foundation of all success. The work is God's in such a sense, that all we do is in vain without His blessing. Hence there is a great responsibility in respect to this agency. And it is hardly necessary to pause for the sake of showing how this means for promoting the missionary enterprise is dependent on the piety of the church. There is not a point in its past history from which we do not learn the power of prayer. It beams out amid the triumphs of Pentecost, the achievements of the Reformation, and the developments of the Spirit in these latter days, in the islands of the sea, on the shores of the Bosphorus and on the plains of Persia. And what is the prayer by which this cause is moved onward, and what will prompt us to offer it? If the object for which we pray is strongly loved, it will be earnestly desired; and if it is a great and momentous object, the intensity of the desire will be increased. Such an object is the conversion of the world; and we shall pray for it just in proportion to the strength of our love for it. Will the heart follow up prayer for Zion, if it has only a vague superficial desire; if it is not deeply pervaded with the love of Christ and a sense of the magnitude of the object itself? Without this it may do it from habit, it may do it reluctantly, it may do it formally, but it will not do it importunately. What is wanting to enable a church to sustain the Monthly Concert of prayer for missions, when the object shall kindle every heart and the fire on the altar shall not go out from the time of one sacrifice to another? The conviction that it will not do for a church to live without such a meeting may keep in existence that which is called so; but this conviction will not bring the church there with its holy and spiritual sacrifices. The life of such a meeting depends on the all pervading power of the cross in the heart. This gives infinite value to the object of prayer. This presents the condition of the world as Christ regards it and carries the heart forth to Him with solicitude and faith, for the promised extension of His kingdom. Only under this influence will such prayer be offered as shall bring about the day when the tent of Zion shall lengthen its cords to the ends of the earth and gather all nations beneath its canopy. It has thus been shown that in respect to the means requisite for spreading the Gospel over the earth, the efficiency of the church lies in its piety.

II. The truth under consideration appears in view of the connection between the piety of the church and the right application of its power.

Its agency is effectual only through the simple gospel of Christ. There was power in the primitive preachers because they adhered to this. It was their great business to bring out the doctrine of the

cross as the fit and sufficient remedy for human guilt and wo. We work effectually only when we work in the same way. But the agency of the church does not spontaneously apply itself in that way in which it will gather the most fruit. Perverting influences are so attendant on human effort, and especially in the present condition of the Christian world, that our security, next to the power of God, is in the holiness of His people. An influence may come in unawares to corrupt our motives and measures and bend our purposes from their original rectitude. It may turn aside our sympathies and energies from the one great object, the publishment of the Gospel of Christ to the nations, and occupy them with subordinate designs.

This perversion has sometimes been seen in the employment of Christian energy in connection about matters that ought never to have been so elevated as to divert the attention of the church from its great work. In this way Satan has succeeded in abridging the force of the onset against his empire. Intellect that ought to have been consecrated to the high designs of the cross has been wasted in the field of controversy. Graces of the Christian that ought to have been exercised in the scenes of holy, self-denying effort for man's salvation, have been concealed. Spirits that ought to have been interceding with strong crying and tears for the coming of the kingdom of holiness, have been in a measure lost to the church by the division of their influence from its noble designs. It is easy to fill the hearts of good men with designs which seem to them to be of the first importance to human welfare, but which withdraw them from the appointed agency for the recovery of the world. It is easy for the heart to disguise to itself its motives and aims, and so lose sight of the simple plan of doing good which our Divine Master has instituted. But if the greatest efficiency of the church in turning this world to God cannot be secured till it unites its energies in this one channel of effort, publishing redemption for sinners in the name of Christ, then the thing greatly to be desired is such a combination and direction of the elements of its power. And what is it that will keep the church bound to the simplicity that is in Christ? What will concentrate its power in the simple work of giving the Gospel to the dying millions who have it not? What will quench the unhallowed zeal which party interests awaken? What will keep in check the various diverting influences, and bring the consolidated strength of the sacramental host into the hallowed enterprise of the world's salvation? Nothing but a great increase of love to Christ, of the mind of Christ, of devotion like his. This will be a source of a moral health and vigor that will secure the undivided agency of the church in the accomplishment of this glorious design.

III. We must consider the fact that we are called to prosecute

the work of missions amidst great discouragements. This enterprise makes a large demand on faith and courage. It is a gradual work, and in it we meet with many obstacles. Some cannot enlist in a scheme that moves on so slowly. Others who have enlisted have grown weary in it for the same reason. Without making a proper estimate of its nature and difficulties, it is assumed that the forest will fall by a single blow of the axe; that the mountains can be leveled, the valleys exalted, and the highway of holiness be built in a day; and that victory will follow the first attack on the forces of the prince of darkness. All such persons mistake as to what we have to do, and the way it is to be done. Make a rational estimate of the work—the languages to be formed and acquired, the ignorance and error, stupidity and corruption to be removed, the obstacles to be overcome that are interwoven with the habits and structure of society, and the prejudices that have been deeply rooted for ages—you will look at it as the wisest and best men regard it, not as the work of a day, but as one requiring long and painful toil. You will not wonder that some faithful and devoted men labor many years before they can report cheering results.

This world offers a hard soil for the moral cultivator. That which men have to face when they go forth into the field will make weak hearts tremble. When the missionary sketches a picture of the scene before him, he is often compelled to shade it very darkly; and if he puts in a bright spot, he is compelled to write beneath it, "In the garden there was a sepulchre." As a great General once said of an eminent hazard he had encountered, that he had now met with a danger worthy of his courage, so the missionary may regard his work as worthy of the noblest heroism. His must not be the low, self-inflated courage, which fails where its exercise is most needed, because it wants genuine faith in God, but that lofty, noble, yet simple and quiet courage, which wraps itself about with the panoply of God, and advances in His strength. The same spirit is demanded of us, that we may go forward with unwavering firmness and hope in the presence of discouragements. Where the laborer falls at the time when he is most needed in the work and best fitted to do it; where there is long delay before the appearance of fruit; where persecutors arm themselves to defeat the cause; if we have not such a spirit of love, and trust, and devotion towards God, we shall faint and become weary. These are trials of faith we must expect to meet. They have already been experienced in some degree, and it will be strange if they do not come in a still more appalling form. It is true that hard times have been passed; let us be thankful that God has raised up men of greater souls, of mightier faith than we, to bear the cause onward. The record of the past is an encouraging one, as it displays the hand of God in the missionary enterprise. It bids us

hope and never despair. And we would believe that the scenes of trouble and dismay through which the cause has been brought have not been without advantage to its friends, in developing their confidence in God. But we have no reason to suppose that such scenes are ended. I would not magnify the difficulties to be encountered. But when I think of the time it must take to give the Gospel to Jew and Gentile over the whole earth, the many faithful men who will fall before the work is finished, the fierce war Satan will wage, that he may retain his dominion, and the strong holds that are to be wrested from his power, I see that the church has not yet attained that confidence in God and his promises which the exigencies of the enterprise demand. If we are prepared to prosecute it through all its delays, perils, and reverses, we must unite with unwavering faith, such love to the cause and its Author, that our hearts will cling to it in every extremity and our hands be ready to sustain it. For this we need a piety nourished into unwonted vigor by much intimate fellowship with Christ and the promises—a faith and devotion of higher type than most of us have yet reached, inspiriting us with hope when the dark night encompasses us and prompting liberal aid to the cause which we are to love alike in its perils and its successes.

IV. I would direct your attention to the connection between the piety of the church and its ability to bear prosperity. While God is a sovereign in the dispensation of grace, the Christian has learned that He has some regard to the humility and sense of dependence in His children, in the bestowment of His comforts; and that such blessings are withheld when they begin to be lifted up with pride. At other times He takes some method to keep them humble, as he did Paul after he was caught up to the third heaven. May we not believe that God deals with His church in accordance with such a principle? With little piety it could not meet great and long continued prosperity in the increase of numbers without the growth of pride and self-confidence. In the healthy growth of the human frame, its strength increases as the several parts are enlarged. So in the growth of the spiritual body we look for the same correspondence in vigor and extent. If there is a healthful external enlargement, there must be a corresponding increase in internal strength. Or, to change the figure, the stakes of Zion's tent must be strengthened to bear the extension of its cords. It is a principle taught in the Bible, and in the history of the church, that God will be glorified in the results of the efforts of His people; and therefore does not authorize them to expect success where they are not prepared with an humble spirit to give honor to Him. We do not know all the reasons which govern Him in this department of His works; therefore we cannot absolutely affirm that He has made successful the efforts of His people for the conversion of

the world, so far as their piety would bear it. But we do know that He will have all the glory of the triumphs of truth. We do know that He has sent dismay and rebuke when His people began to feel that their own strength had gotten them the victory. We know also that it demands more than common humility and faith to be carried rapidly from victory to victory, and yet preserve a God-honoring spirit. And this is enough to teach us that there is an important connection between the piety of the church and its success in the Missionary work; and that while it possesses little spiritual vigor, it cannot reasonably expect that God will cause it to advance rapidly in the conquest of the world. It is a humiliating fact when the servants of God have so little of the spirit that delights to exalt his faithfulness and power, that they cannot bear a rapid success in this enterprise of mercy. That to break down their confidence in man, and develop that reliance on Him with which they can use aright a spiritual triumph, He must withhold His gracious power and sometimes leave them to fierce struggles with their foes. That He must sometimes remove standard bearers, and seem to weaken the forces of His people as He did those of Gideon, that He may make them strong to bear as well as achieve victory. But this has been the order of His dispensations, and doubtless will be so hereafter; showing that the strength we need in doing the great work committed to our hands, does not consist in numbers but in holiness.

If such is the intimate and essential connection between the piety of the church and its efficiency in the work of spreading the Gospel, we can readily answer the question, What is required that the American churches may prosecute with increased vigor and success, the work of Missions? It is a large measure of the spirit of Christ, consisting in faith, love, humility, and self-denial. It is not wealth. God has put into the hands of His people an ample amount of wealth to meet the demands of this cause. It is not the knowledge of the condition of the world. This is abundantly furnished. The state of the heathen world is now laid open to all in wide-spread authentic intelligence. It is not facilities for doing the work. These are multipliplied to a degree that gives us access to almost every section of this dark world. That which is wanted is a baptism of the spirit of Christ—such a supremacy of love to God and man, that under the conviction, we are not our own, our property and our children are not our own, we shall adopt it as our great work, with all the heart, to show the way of life to all the dwellers on the earth. Such a piety will have as its basis, strong and unwavering principle. It will comprise a deep compassion for the miserable, cheerful self-sacrifice, unyielding courage, and a heaven-directed faith. Then means will be furnished according to the demand. Christian energy will not be misapplied. The heart of the church will not faint under tempo-

rary discouragements; and success will be welcomed with the spirit that glorifies God. It will gladden the hearts of our brethren in foreign lands, and be a bright token of mercy to the heathen world, when there shall be such a general outpouring of the Spirit on our churches as shall secure to them an increase of the spiritual strength as well as numbers—imparting largely of the mind of Christ to all His followers. Thus will they be prepared to fulfill the mission of mercy to which their Master calls them.

I need not say, concerning these our brethren whom we are about to consecrate to the work of preaching the Gospel, one to the Jews, and the other to the Gentiles, that they will soon faint in their works, unless their hearts are fixed, trusting in God, and deeply imbued with the spirit of Christ. They go to a dark land, full of corruption and foes to the truth. With a cheerful heart we bid them go, and go too with spirits joyful in the Lord. At the same time we say, that as it was the primitive taste, "to believe, to suffer, and to love," it must be theirs also. We will follow them with affectionate sympathy, and ever ask that great grace may be upon them. I can see the ship which bears them from their native shore on a pleasant morning entering the harbor of the Turkish capital. As she lies in the waters of the Golden Horn, under Seraglio Point, with Stomboul and her mosques and minarets on their right, with Pera and Galata on their left, the Bosphorus opening just beyond them, Scutari with its tall dark cypresses in front, and the sun coming up from beyond the site of the ancient Chalcedony, it will be to them a sight of surpassing brilliancy.* Well may they suppose they are about to enter the garden of the world. But how soon will they tread among the monuments of spiritual death, with only here and there the signs of a resurrection. When they have engaged in the work of repairing that moral desolation, with obstacles to success on every hand, and found the remark verified—"It takes a great deal of labor to do a little good;" what will sustain them in their work? Not youthful enthusiasm, nor the love of achievement and earthly glory, nor the beauties of nature and art around them. Nothing but that devotion which unites with love to Christ and to the service which He assigns them, a firm reliance on the arm of God and zeal for his glory.

This spirit, so important for the missionary, is also important for us, that we may execute our part in this blessed enterprise. Not a momentary impulse or resolution awakened by some fervid appeal. Under such an influence we may act boldly for a time and strike for some high design, but without a vigorous spiritual health such effort will not last. We want that piety which has strong intelligent principle for its foundation, the devotion of

* From a published letter of the late Professor N. W. Fiske.

Christ for the model of its development; which brings us with an unfaltering faith to bind the cause of missions to the eternal Throne, and consecrates us in one entire and perpetual sacrifice for its promotion. May the Saviour impart to all, His own blessed spirit, to the glory of His excellent name!

SERMON CCCCLXXXIII.

BY REV. JOSEPH F. TUTTLE,
Of Rockaway, N. J.

THE HAPPINESS OF CHRISTIANS IN BEING WITH CHRIST.

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."—*John* xvii. 24.

THESE words were uttered in prayer by the Lord Jesus Christ. Analyzed in their connection, they assert or imply the following truths. First, the existence of a covenant between God the Father and the Son. On certain conditions the Father covenants to give the Son certain persons to be His. Second, the circumstances in which these words were uttered clearly point out the conditions to be fulfilled by the Son. He was to become incarnate, experience the trials of men, and at last become the propitiation for the sins of the world by suffering death. Third, these words assert the precise result to be attained through this covenant thus fulfilled by each party in all its conditions. Those given to Christ are to be with Him in heaven to behold His glory. Fourth, the means through which this result is to be secured are distinctly implied. The sanctification of Christians, through Christ "the Truth," made efficient by the Holy Spirit. Heaven as a place must be reached by holiness as a condition. In the counsels of God, executed by His Son, and intending such excellent results, heaven and holiness were to become synonymous. Without the one the other is impossible, and with the one the absence of the other is impossible, so much so, that the truth will not be perverted greatly were we to say heaven is holiness and holiness is heaven. And Fifth, the pledge for the accomplishment of this plan is pointed out. It is the prayer of the Son of God. If the prayers of Abraham saved Lot, and those of Moses saved Israel from urgent ruin, shall the prayer of Christ fail of an answer? Away then with

the dishonorable doctrine, that any one of those given by the Father to the Son, and for whom that Son, so soon to be crucified has prayed, shall at length fail of being with Christ!

From the range of topics presented by this analysis, we must content ourselves with selecting one, *the happiness those given to Christ shall experience in being with Him where He is.*

Let us examine some of the elements of this happiness. And in the First place, freedom from sin enters largely into this happiness.

Sin is a source of misery to all who practice it. The wicked are not happy, even though they love to sin. The most abandoned have moments of painful thought, when conscience, seizing the wings of anticipation, bears them to the judgment of the Great Day. Within them is a settled disquietude concerning actions even they cannot approve. They know that to treat God as they do with neglect and open contempt, is not only base, but ruinous. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." What an assertion! How unceasing the agitation of the sea, the waves of which know no rest! And is it true? The Scriptures assert, as joint-witness with universal experience, that every wicked heart is distressed with a ceaseless agitation and disquietude, which the world can no more calm to peace, than a child can still the ocean by casting upon its troubled surface a single drop of oil.

But if those who love sin are disquieted by it, how miserable must they be, who have been renewed in the spirit and temper of their minds, when they do the things they would not? The greater advances they make in the knowledge of their own hearts, the more painful become their their convictions of their own unworthiness. But especially when they see their constant tendencies to wickedness, notwithstanding the love of Christ, when they recall their numerous transgressions and imperfections, so dishonorable to the Saviour who has bought them with a price, they feel grieved, and with anguish realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin. As the work of sanctification progresses, the more exquisite becomes their pain from remaining corruption. Here we have unfolded much of the pain suffered by a sincere Christian while in the world. With a heart quickened to perceive the beauty of holiness, and with anxious longings to become perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect, to sin under any circumstances is the cause of great distress.

Accordingly how often do we read the expressions of anguish wrung by sin from those most distinguished in the church even when apparently almost ripe for heaven. The mere mention of such names as Paul, Brainerd and Payson, will suggest all we mean by the assertion. They seemed to suffer up to the moment when the portals of heaven were thrown wide open for their admission.

But it was one condition of entrance there, that the soul should become possessor of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. O, glorious hour, when the soul enters heaven, not so much because it is a place where angels dwell, and all things are lovely, but because, through infinite grace, the soul shall no more sin. The bonds are snapped and the spirit is free. Such is one element of the happiness of being with Christ. Perfect and eternal freedom from sin is the portion of those famed persons. As they bend around the throne of God and the Lamb, they shall no longer utter their heart-broken cry, "Father, we have sinned againt heaven and before thee;" but their words shall be the words of long, hymning gratitude for being washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

2. A second element in that happiness is living in a world where the practice of holiness will be as natural and easy as the practice of sin is now in this world.

Here all the tendencies are towards sin, like a deep, mighty river. With effort or without, this flood will bear us to our destiny. Effort may enable us to accomplish the fatal voyage more quickly, but if we prefer to fold our arms and sleep, the strong current of this world will in due time sweep us into perdition. If we wish to ascend that stream, it must be by vigorous effort. To reach heaven without such effort would be as impossible as to ascend a river without lifting an oar, or stringing a muscle.

The course of things in this world may be represented also by the ascent of a steep mountain, the sides of which are made difficult by rocks, and ice, and gorges. If the climber choose to give himself up, and relax his precarious foothold, his own weight will carry him to the bottom, a mangled corpse; but would he reach the top, he must step carefully, now clinging with strong grasp to a jagged rock or friendly bush, and now with painful effort climbing on his knees. Less care, less effort, less pain, might be fatal. Such is the pathway to heaven. It is a rugged, steep, unsmoothed path, requiring in its ascent, care, diligence, energy, perseverance, and much grace from on high. It is not more natural for a sinner to climb that path, than for a sluggard to climb up that steep and icy mountain. It is natural rather for him to relax his hold and precipitating himself, add to the frightful momentum which carries him swiftly into the abyss. Every sinner loves his own ruin so well, that he seems to use all the ingenious artifices of the spiritual suicide, and unless prevented by Divine grace, he will at last consummate the dreadful death of his own soul.

The same fact may be illustrated also by the battle-field. Numerous and malignant enemies surround one here. He must contend even like a desperate man, or be slain. And yet universal experience proves it to be true, that to fight in this warfare, even for eternal life, is not natural, or pleasing to the soul. It yields

itself gladly a captive, and sinks to "chains of darkness" without a sincere effort for a victory which is crowned with heaven.

In one word, such is the world, and such those living in it, that the current sweeps mightily towards perdition, and to stem that current requires painful effort. It will cost many heart-aches to the regenerate to find within himself tendencies to give up and be carried downwards. Anguish will sometimes wring his heart as he finds drowsiness paralyzing his energies, and his enemies gradually acquiring the fresh mastery of him. It is then his anguish becomes articulate, and he cries out, "Lord save, I perish!"

This is a source of deep anxiety to the Christian. As yet holiness is not the natural habit of his soul, whilst the "old man" still rules him with a rod of iron. "O wretched man that I am!" such is his cry, as he drags around with him everywhere "the body of this death," chained to him like a fetid corpse. But in heaven it is not thus. There all the tendencies are towards holiness. The current sweeps that way. All companions and associations are holy. The soul itself is holy, being now perfect as its Father in heaven is perfect; and above all, Jesus Christ is there encircling those given to Him with the attractions of His omnipotent love, anddrawing them irresistibly towards holiness. In heaven the practice of holiness will be as natural as to breathe. It will no longer require that painful and unnatural effort which must be put forth here, even to attain a miserable and imperfect righteousness.

And as the soul of a Christian breathes such an atmosphere and is braced up by all the holy associations and tendencies of the place, and feels itself naturally mounting as on eagle's wings through the grace of Christ, how unutterable its joy, how past all expression its feeling of security!

> "No more to suffer or to sin,
> No snare without his faith to try,
> No traitor heart within."

This feeling of security against sin, this feeling that the soul has been so restored to the perfect image of God, that the practice of holiness shall forever be as natural and easy there, as the practice of sin was natural and easy in the world whence it came, will fill it with joy greater than ear hath heard, or eye seen, or heart conceived. The redeemed shall sin no more in heaven, they shall not wish or be inclined to sin, and through infinite and ever-sustaining grace there shall be no danger that it shall ever sin again. My brethren, is it not strange, almost passing belief, that any sinner is to attain to such perfection as this? And yet we hope we are tending thither.

3. A third element in this happiness will be the cultivation of the mind and heart by proper objects and pursuits.

Even here, thought is a source of great pleasure. As the mind

penetrates and comprehends truth it feels delight. In heaven thought will be free. Earth shall clog it no longer. The glorious body shall feel no more fatigue, nor be weighed down with indolence, but like an untiring angel search through the works of God. If here the mind experiences so much delight, whilst with great labor learning the alphabet of knowledge, what shall be its joy there when it shall be instructed by angels, and with them shall pursue "all knowledge" with a vigor knowing no weariness and a relish knowing no satiety. Here the powers are weak and the capacities limited. There they shall have every excellent pursuit by which they may be developed into the symmetry of perfect manhood. Perhaps angels, their own minds illumined by the Father of lights, shall accompany the redeemed on excursions of mercy, for the acquirement of knowledge. They shall especially study the ways of God as seen in his perfect moral government, and their rapture will keep pace with their wonder. What floods of light shall rush across the mind under the teachings of Gabriel, or the great Lawgiver, himself grown angelic under the instructions of heaven during so many ages! But to be where Christ is, how shall that companionship cause the mind to expand and the heart to swell! On earth "never man spake like this man." In three years, under this Divine teaching, twelve ignorent menmade such prodigious advances in knowledge as to fit them to be apostles of Christianity to a world in ruins, and this before they had put off this vile body. What must be the progress of those same minds unincumbered and free, under the same Great Teacher in heaven? Boundless will be the delight of ever continuing under such a teacher as the Lord Jesus Christ!

And the heart, too,—the power to will and to feel; how intense the joys springing from this source? How even the will reduced to a patient submission to God, at times experiences such pleasure as words cannot describe; what shall it be then, when the will of the creature shall be so swallowed up in the will of the Creator as to feel an eternal and undisturbed submission to that will? Now to see the Divine perfections, especially as unfolded in the plan of redemption, what a well-spring of joy to the heart perfectly satisfied! Heaven is no place for the sluggard, nor the stoicism of philosophy, nor the hard heart of sin, but for sympathy, for emotion—in one expressive word, for love. "It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Then the mind no longer shall see through a glass darkly, but face to face, with unclouded vision, and the heart shall beat with the unmingled pleasure of loving God and all holy beings perfectly. Mind and heart shall have ample food, and "from glory to glory" shall be their progress.

4. A fourth element in that happiness will be the society of

heaven. The pure take pleasure in the society of kindred spirits. What a rich picture of happiness springing from the social principle in human nature, when the mysterious stranger walked with the disciples to Emmaus! Their hearts already imbued with love that beat in unison with his, as he spake of Messiah and redemption, and when he vanished from their sight, only recognized at the last moment, they said, "did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" What a delicious joy must that conversation and communion have produced, making those two hearts burn as they came into contact with this Divine being whose influence penetrated them! And shall these same hearts experience less delight in the same companionship in heaven? To be with Jesus, what an exalted privilege to all who have learned to love him! To be in the immediate presence of God, with the spirit of adoption so perfect that we can exercise a love which casteth out fear, and address Him as Father, who can measure this joy?

Angels shall be our companions also, and they will have much to tell in their own history which will be pleasant and joyful to hear. The story of some veteran belonging to a past generation delights us, and the hours spent in listening to such an one are ever reckoned among the memorable privileges of life. But should an archangel repeat the story of creation, with all its thrilling incidents, and chant the very song of the angels, when the first morning broke upon the world, what pleasure would it not excite? And is it too much to believe that such will be our privileges in heaven? And in return, perhaps the angels will request us to describe the whole of the pit whence we were digged, the deep debasement of sin, the agony of conviction, the joy of conversion, with its new hope, just as we would describe strange things to the blind, since angels are without experience on that wonderful theme. On that theme, perhaps even these dumb tongues may grow eloquent, and as we repeat the strange story of our salvation by Christ, almost incredible to ourselves, we shall reciprocate with the angels the pleasure they have conferred on us, by adding new emotions of wonder and pleasure to their already happy hearts.

The redeemed of past ages will be there also, of meeting whom we have often thought with a sort of unbelieving anticipation. Will it be no pleasure to meet Enoch, the only good man of a whole generation, and hear of his conflicts, hear him expand his own condensed history, as given in the Scriptures, until we have it expanded into all its thrilling details. And so with Noah and Moses, how will our hearts expand at the rehearsal of their eventful lives. The lights and shades of such lives as Isaiah and Jeremiah, shall add their glory to the rich delight. And perhaps more intensely interesting than all beside, will be the personal narrations of the twelve apostles, recounting those numerous inci-

dents in the life of Jesus, "the which, if they could be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." The narration of the great apostle of the Gentiles, given in meagre outline in the Bible, shall there become full, and exalt our joys.

We shall recognise our friends there. The disciples recognized Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the beloved John knew one, so glorious that he fell as dead at his feet, to be like unto the Son of man, on whose breast he himself had leaned during the supper. We shall know our friends in heaven. The good man who lately died among us, used to say with great animation, "I expect to see my mother and sisters in heaven, and other friends who shall follow me. I shall know them, and they me, and I think it will be pleasant meeting. I know I shall see the great worthies of the church in all ages, and I cannot express the satisfaction I feel in the belief that they will not be ashamed to call me brother." She who has been snatched so suddenly from us, has probably met that good man of whom I have just spoken. Perhaps he was the first to welcome her home. And is it too much to believe that in some such moment, these who have so lately left us, may meet my sister, or your companion, or your child, and carry news of us to them? Is it too much to believe, that some in heaven, having left dear friends on earth, a husband or children, shall anxiously interrogate these latest messengers from among us, concerning those left behind them? Perhaps the mother in heaven will inquire concerning the children for whom she prayed with her latest breath, and the father seeks to know whether his son is following in his footsteps. And oh, my friends, what report has gone to heaven concerning us?

What a delicious element in the happiness to be conferred on those given to Christ, in the society of heaven. What a fraternity of joy will that be, in which angels and the perfectly good shall be brought together by love, and over which Jehovah shall shed the ineffable bliss of His own infinite heart of love.

Finally, those who are with Christ in heaven shall suffer no more.

It is hard to bear affliction, and it requires much grace to kiss the rod which smites us, even in mercy. The heart has vast capacity for suffering. For their own sake no one chooses pain, sickness, and death. These are our attendants in this world. Sin has made us debtors, and through these harsh executioners, collects the due. It is not only hard to suffer ourselves, but very hard to see others suffer, especially those dear to us. We sometimes are crushed by the sufferings of friends, which we cannot relieve. In one word, suffering is our constant attendant through the world.

But it is a singular fact that the people of God are especially

called to suffer, and sometimes chastening peculiarly grievous is the evidence of adoption. The heated furnaces and lion's dens, and bloody crosses, are found in the paths of the good, and with the Bible to guide we can partially explain the mysteries of affliction. Perhaps no means leads the soul sanctified in part, so certainly back to God. The seeds of sorrow, scattered by the hand of Christ, yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby, and the fierce fire of affliction consumes the dross and reflects back the perfect image of the Refiner. God chastens us "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness," and yet the apostle himself declares this chastening for the present not to be joyous, but grievous.

Affliction is not known in heaven. God wipes all tears from their eyes. The redeemed have become sanctified, and love will be sufficient to keep them in the path of obedience. The rod will no longer be necessary. Such scenes as we witness on earth will never be introduced in heaven. Pain and sickness are prohibited enemies, which never can approach the good. There will be no scenes of long anxiety over a friend balancing between life and death, and no low moan of anguish from a broken heart, as the balance turns in favor of death. They shall no more die. Everlasting life is their portion. They have plucked and eaten the fruit of the tree of life, and have drank of that living stream which gushes from beneath the throne of God and the Lamb, and henceforth death shall disquiet them no more for ever.

Blessed place, exempt from suffering and from death. Come, my brethren, and feast your hearts on such anticipations. Banish despondency as you think of heaven. Yield yourselves to hopes so full of comfort, and let a chastened imagination rove in the approaching future. It is meet that we should rejoice even in the midst of tears, when we have hopes that our departed friends have already reached that place where sickness and death are only known by remembering the past. If they have attained such enviable felicity, that they shall no more suffer, why shall we be inconsolable for their absence? Why wish their return to this world, where they must again weep, again be sick, and again die? Could we attain the wishes we sometime express in the anguish we feel for their absence, and they suddenly be brought from heaven to earth, they might reproach us as Samuel did Saul, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" Why should we despond, and murmur, and long for their return? If their Father and our Father has for ever freed them from suffering, let us not selfishly wish to rob our dear departed ones of the wondrous felicity to which they have become heirs, but rather bless that mercy, which makes our loss their gain. For truly, to all given to Christ, to die is gain. To be with Christ where He is, to sin no more, to have no desire to sin, to expand the mind and heart

with the noblest pursuits, to mingle with angels, and the redeemed, and be companions with Christ our elder Brother, and to be for ever free from all suffering—this is the consummation of bliss; and when we see a friend entering upon such a state, let us magnify the grace of Him who doeth all things well, even though it leave us childless or orphans to finish our pilgrimage alone.

1. Fromthis subject thus developed, it is natural to infer that that there is a vast difference between earth and heaven.

Here all sin, there no one sins. Here all suffer, there no one suffers. Here the mind is wearied with effort, and the heart is chilled by selfishness, there the mind will know no fatigue, and the heart ever beat with love. Here we meet the wicked, the impure, the wanton, the selfish, there we shall meet only the perfectly holy and good. Here we bend in agony by the cold clay of the dead, and utter the low wail of a broken heart, there we shall never see the cold clay of the dead, or utter sorrow as those dear depart from us. O wondrous contrast! It is no matter of surprise that an afflicted saint just gone home, as he feasted his heart with such prospects, should grasp the hand of his pastor, and with straining eyes and broken utterance exclaim, "this is almost too much for a sinner to expect!"

2. We may also infer from this subject, that to those who go to be with Christ, death is no calamity.

So thought the apostle when he challenged death for his sting and the grave for its victory. He had faith to say of himself, "for me to live is Christ, to die is gain." And is it a calamity for those given to Christ to enter on such happiness as has been described? to exchange suffering for joy? hope for reality? fear for fruition? and earth for heaven? Is it a calamity to be folded in the bosom of the Great Shepherd, and carried safely through the sullen stream of death? It is a calamity even early to begin those joys in heaven, when only a few years of sorrow have been our portion here? My friends, let us not rob ourselves of this most excellent conviction, that whenever death, no matter when or how, becomes the threshold of heaven, it is no calamity. To a real Christian, death is the Jordan rolling between him and Canaan, and though it be the most solemn hour of his existence, yet leaning on Christ he will venture into deep waters in the joyful hope of a welcome on the other side.

In all other cases, death is a great calamity, and we blame not the wicked for shrinking away from the king of terrors. To such death is not the threshold of heaven, but the precurser to everlasting retribution.

> "There is a death whose pang
> Outlasts the fleeting breath,
> Oh, what eternal horrors hang
> Around the second death."

3. We may further infer the reasonableness of constant and strenuous exertion to secure heaven.

If it be esteemed laudable for a young man to toil diligently for years to acquire reputation among his fellows, why shall he be esteemed a madman, if he devote all his energies to acquire such a reputation that angels and the good will love to call him brother, and God himself will affectionately welcome him as "a son dearly beloved?" If we *deem* it reasonable for one to labor for competence here, why shall we consider him foolish who is laying up treasures in heaven? Come, my friends, and let us reason together. For one moment place yourself on the death-bed. Suppose the air is laden with the praises of men, and you see around you the evidences of an honest competence. The world has gone well with you, but now you are to die, tell me what more the world can do for you? Can it fling light into the grave? Can it disarm death of its terrors? Can it afford one ray of comfort to your heart? Can it whisper of an eternal city above, and of a safe conduct thither? Oh, no; the world, like a traitorous friend, is forsaking you; and now, when you most need it, you have no friend. It is the sad conclusion of life which many misguided persons bring on themselves.

My friends, life is so short, death is so solemn, eternity has such joy and such woe, that he only is wise who so uses life as to secure heaven and escape hell. He acts a reasonable part who lives for heaven; but oh, what severe expression can sufficiently reprobate that insanity which squanders life and loses heaven? Life so spent as to be the "earnest" of heaven, is well spent, but spent in such a way as to secure this world alone, this is to sow to the wind and reap the whirlwind. This is to make life an irreparable failure; and he who makes this failure in a world blessed with the mighty agencies of the Cross, may expect to be addressed as, "Thou fool, what has it profited thee to gain a very small part of the world, and then lose even that, and with it thy soul?"

D vine Providence has lent an emphasis to these words, as addre sed to the young. What a scene we have just witnessed!* It was not the aged sinking to rest; it was the young snatched away as by a whirlwind. It was not the feeble and diseased, cut down when all expected; but one on whose cheek health bloomed, and who bade fair to see yet many years. The victim was so choice a one, her sickness so painful, and her death so sudden. Can it be possible we shall see her no more? That her voice shall no longer mingle in the melodies of this sanctuary? As we recall the past, it seems a delightful dream, with a sad and sudden waking. But heaven is no dream, and we believe she is

* Occasioned by the death of a young and interesting member of the Church of which the author is pastor.—Ed.

there. We would not disturb her joy with our selfish regrets or call her back again to say "I am sick," and then to die.

But had this sudden death come to many who hear me now, how comfortless would be our sorrow! We should mourn as those without hope. No hope; sickness with heavy hand crushing you, reason fled, and at last death closing the scene. My young friends, how can you trifle or delay with such eminent dangers pressing around you? Already several of your number have been cut down suddenly since the year began;—shall the warning be unheeded? Hear what saith the scripture: "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

In conclusion, we may infer consolatien for those who mourn. This whole community has suffered loss in the sudden death of one of its most lovely members, but we learn to repress our regrets as we recur to the evidence that she is moving in the society of angels and the perfectly good in heaven. This Church mourns the loss of a dear child, whom she early baptized and welcomed to her communion; but shall we murmur when we think of her as sinless, sanctified, and happy, in the presence of God and where Christ is? And especially a family mourns. Their hearts are still aching with the agony of separation, and their tears flow apace at every fresh remembrance of her. And yet even for them, and for all like them, there is consolation. Jesus has prayed, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." They have strong evidence to confirm their hope that the departed was embraced in that prayer, and that now, in her case, that prayer has been answered. And is this no consolation? We do not bid you cease to weep, but to weep in hope, and submissively. We do not bid you cease to feel, for Christianity teaches no such stoicism. But while you feel your loss to be great, have gratitude for a mercy which as much outweighs the affliction as heaven is better than earth. If the departed be happy, bless the infinite grace which has saved another sinner, and then follow on to the same exalted joy. May the blessing of the compassionate Jesus rest on you, and on all the children of affliction, giving you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness!

FAITH, HOPE, VICTORY.

"Faith worketh by love," says the apostle. It is a principle of God's government that love must urge us to every duty; and for every relation of life there is an affection. Look at that young woman. A little while since, she seemed only to live for herself, for pleasure and admiration. No rewards could have bribed her to self-denial, retirement and watchfulness. But follow her now to yonder shadowed room. She is beside the cradle of her babe. She has forgotten the world. Her world is in her child. The babe is sick. Fever has breathed upon it. It has lain for weeks hovering betwixt life and death; but the changed girl is there, unwearied by day, sleepless by night. The babe grows. He is a wayward boy, a disobedient and profligate youth; but though all cast him away, the mother's heart yearns over him, pities him, pardons him, loves him still. Why? What reward has she? What has thus changed her whole nature? The love that grew with that babe in her heart, and was born unquenchable withhis immortal life. Now, my brethren, this is the powerful charm by which faith does its work in the Christian's transformation. When God converts a sinner to his service, he inspires him with love. The love of Christ constraineth him to live not to himself, "but to Him who died for him and rose again." It is the remembrance of Christ, his best, truest, most faithful friend, which prevails in his heart over the world's temptation to sin. How can he sin for his own pleasure, when Christ, whom he loves above all others, died to save him and make him holy?

Hope is the child of faith. The Christian believes in an eternal heaven, and therefore he hopes for it. What were we without hope, the nerve of enterprise, the soul of patience, the cordial of the sick! The sailor braves for it the storm and the wave; the merchant ventures for it his wealth and his name; the student gives for it his long and anxious nights.

The Christian hopes; and when the world tempts, and his evil nature incites, and the devil flatters, he looks upwards to Jesus, where He sits at the right hand of God. "A little longer," he says, "and the struggle will be over. My sorrows shall fly away before the eternal morning; and the crown, the palm, the harp, and the smile of God shall be mine." He believes the promise of his Lord. He has a hope of the better, the nobler, the more enduring. His faith has overcome the world.

Thus is the Christian's life a fight; but he struggles manfully, courageously, cheerfully and confidently. He knows that God is

with him. He knows that God will help him. He knows that God will give him the victory.

His fight is onward, still urging forward his march, through ambush and ranks of open enemies, until he reaches the grave, and bows his uncovered head to him who is the resurrection and the life. Angels have watched him through all his difficult career, though he has seen them not. Now they hover within his dying sight. He seizes the omen. "Victory!" he cries, as he gives up his breath. "Victory!" shout his guard of heavenly friends, as they bare upwards his exalting spirit from the world he has overcome. "Victory!" respond the keepers of the everlasting gates, as they fling wide open and uplifted the portals of the skies. "Victory!" "Victory!" "Victory!" is heard in thundering acclamations, as he passes through the shining ranks towards the inner circle around the Lamb that was slain, and kneels at his feet. "Blessed art thou for thou hast overcome!" pronounces the King of the Church, and crowns him with leaves from the tree of life. Now heaven is hushed to hear the voice of their ransomed brother; and clear, and reverent, and joyful, is that voice, as he casts from his head the crown at his Master's feet, and cries, "Thine be the praise, my LORD and my GOD. Thy faith hath given me the victory. I have triumphed in thy name!" Then burst from countless armies of souls redeemed like him, floods of praise, loud as the many waters—"Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks be to God who gave us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—*Dr. Bethune.*

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New-York.

THY KINGDOM COME.

"Thy Kingdom come."—*Matthew* 6 : 10.

Venerable Fathers and Beloved Brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ:

I CONFESS to you, that in view of my appearance before you to conduct your meditations, by your own appointment, I have felt myself much at a loss in the selection of a suitable theme.

So many years have transpired since this annual service was begun, and so many and such able pens have been employed, that it seemed to me that every aspect in which our great work could be, has been presented, and that I could hope to say nothing which would attract by its novelty or its peculiarity. But I have been rebuked by the reflection that this most blessed work never loses its freshness; that what has interested will still interest; what has commanded the heart will still command it, though often called up. This is the peculiarity of God's plans and works; while man's inventions become monotonous and fail in their hold on the mind.

In my dilemma I have taken counsel of the occasion, and asked myself

why this solemn convocation, why this gathering of Christian brethren from every part of this land? Is it to learn "some new thing" like the ancient Athenians? Is it not to have our minds and hearts refreshed by mingling in meditation on the characteristics of our work? Is it not to contemplate the progress of that work, and thank God and set out with new courage? If this be so, I feel that one great point will be gained, if we may take our places at our Master's feet and learn of Him; and this I would seek in this exercise.

Let us transfer ourselves mentally to the scene depicted in the fifth of Matthew. We behold there our dear Lord in the midst of an intensely interesting throng, removed from all the exciting circumstances of the world. It was a mountain sanctuary, the broad expanse of heaven the canopy. He developes clearly and beautifully the spirit which he would have his disciples cultivate; he clears away the false interpretations of the divine law which had debased the people; he leads them into just view of the practical course his system required; he teaches them duty and devotion; what a scene! The master inducting his chosen ones into the mode in which they should approach the throne of the heavenly grace, and what subjects should occupy the mind and the heart! It is there, our object as men laboring that truth and righteousness may fill the earth, has a special and prominent place. Thus shalt thou pray, "Thy kingdom come." Oh, I would that we could here for a moment lose all thought of official relations, and realize the simplicity and sublimity of that scene, and, taking part with that assembly as learners, bring every circumstance strongly home to our own hearts. This is the theme which our Great Teacher gives for our meditations—

THY KINGDOM COME.—MATT: 6 : 10.

And may His Holy Spirit aid us, while we bring ourselves to the contemplation of what is here involved.

My Brethren, you will observe,

I. That our object as a missionary association, seeking to establish the kingdom of righteousness, is commended *by the highest authority* in the church of God. He who speaks is the Head over all things to the church, who has all power given unto him in heaven and upon earth.

To the inquiry what kingdom is intended by this petition, we can be at no loss for an answer. Two kingdoms in general are spoken of in the word of God, viz: his providential kingdom or his sovereignty, and his kingdom of grace. Of the former it is to be remarked it is universal. Ever since there has been a world or a created being, this kingdom was "come." Universal, unlimited dominion, supreme sovereignty, belongs necessarily to God. And though many of his intelligent creatures neithe

acknowledge nor know him as their God, over all, his might and his goodness are constantly exercised. Of this it is said, "His kingdom ruleth over all." He is Lord of lords, and King of kings—the King of the nations of the earth. All wait upon him and receive the daily supply for their wants. "In him we live, move, and have our being."

There is another kingdom spoken of in the sacred word—one not yet fully come, and that is the gospel kingdom, or the kingdom of grace. Of this it was prophesied by Daniel, five centuries before Christ, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." A careful comparison of the portions of the chapter, preceding this verse, proves indubitably that the kingdom of the Messiah, or the gospel kingdom, is the one contemplated by Daniel. The prevailing opinion in the time of our Lord was, that a mighty kingdom was to be set up. Hence the inquiry of the Pharisees (Luke 17 : 20) "when the kingdom of God shall come." With this our Lord's mind was naturally filled, and as naturally he commended it to the affections and devotions of his disciples. Having given a distinct place to this in his first recorded discourse, he made it the subject of charge in closing his ministry on earth. That command, "Preach the gospel to every creature," bequeaths to the church the same object.

And what do we seek, but to take up the work as left by those who have gone before, and carry the Scriptures to every benighted, revolted heart; to convey the message of mercy to the lost wanderer; apply the balm of Gilead to the stricken soul; recover the rebel and bring him as an humble devotee at the feet of the God of heaven; seeking that the kingdom of grace may fully and triumphantly come to all and over all? Does our Lord commend this work? We can ask no higher warrant. We know we are right. Our work is taken altogether from the category of theories and speculations, and ranges with solemn realities which bear the impress divine.

Most comforting, blessed conclusion! If our hearts at any time hesitate, this will re-nerve them. If our brethren become affected by unbelieving apprehensions, this is the key to remove every difficulty and rally their energy anew. What more potent than the consideration, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" 'Tis our Father's work we do, our Father's will we obey. There are times when it is especially proper to dwell on this. One of these is, when results are reached so slowly, and then are so stinted, that the benefactions of the church seem almost as committed to the deep. Then, to refer to this starting principle—"It is God's work; we are right,"—settles all the discouragements and difficulties of appearances, and rallies the wasting

energies. Another season is, that when the sympathizing heart contemplates the sacrifices and trials of the convert from heathenism, and reasons, 'Why place the unhappy creature in situations of such danger? Do we well to disturb him? Do we well to call him to the adoption of what will almost necessarily provoke suffering and entail sorrow upon his life?' With all other views and considerations, this comes in, to quiet the sympathetic questioner, 'This work is of God; it is commended to us by him who was all tenderness and love.'

Yes, its application goes beyond this. The enemy sneers and calls us enthusiasts and ranks our work with the crusades, as an effort after notoriety and excitement. He sneeringly tells us, the clergy must have something to occupy the imaginations of their supporters, some schemes or theories about which feeling and eloquent appeals may be made, and by which they may secure their hold on the unthinking. The question is, 'Whom shall we regard, God or man?' Have we God's warrant, it matters not how the world sneer; the work will prove itself to be the work of God, and it may be that passage shall find its verification in our day, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish."

Oh, that we could feel always the full force of the divine authority under which we act. Difficulties will arise. Men of Sanballat's spirit will be found, who will, by every stratagem, and even under the pleasing guise of friendship, seek to retard the work. We need to feel accordingly, as the ancient servant of God did, "I am engaged in too great a work; I cannot come down to you." Ah, how well would it have been, had we always realized under whom we were engaged? Are we not reminded here of our failings? Has the divine authority in this matter been so fully before our minds as it should have been? Have we not too much regarded this as an affair of men? Have we not failed, as we looked up, to lose all thought of human agencies and organizations? If there is one thought which, before all others, should be present with, and press heavily on the mind, and one of especially sustaining power, it is this —*our work is commended by the highest authority redeemed creatures know.*

II. You will observe, that this object, commended by our Lord, is one *of vast moment.*

The first thing which should call out our anxiety, is our own personal interest in the precious blood of the Lamb. The concern of one's own salvation is of incalculable moment. And all the circumstances and considerations which give it importance, give character and importance to the object before us. Yes, they are multiplied as manyfold as the persons are numerous whom we seek to benefit. The field is the world, with its ten hundred millions of immortal beings, whose interests for two worlds are involved. Our arithmetic fails in its attempts to give a just estimate

of one soul ; how much more that multiplied into ten hundred millions. Sitting at the feet of such a Master, we expect naught but matters of most weighty character to fall from his lips.

My brethren, must we not attach something to the place which our Lord has assigned this subject ? We call this our model prayer. Its order means something. It is framed on the same principle with the law of the ten commands, embracing first what relates to Deity, as first in order and importance. Here stands second in order, and in close connection with kindred petitions, *this*, involving our great missionary aim. And how is the glory of the Highest, that chief end of rational being, concerned in this enterprise ? Its success is *the setting* up of rightful, divine authority in the hearts of men. Ever since the fall, a usurper, himself the arch-transgressor, has had control. The hand of the true God was everywhere, around men and on them, and with them, opening the channels of every comfort, bestowing the bounty of his goodness in divine exuberance ; yet they knew him not, and of course acknowledged him not, but gave his glory to another, whose yoke they wore, and who led them " captive at his will."

This yoke should be broken ; and only as it is broken, are immortal beings recovered to their true position, and is the harmony of the moral universe restored ; thus only is the rightful authority of Him who should have all hearts, exalted to its true place ; and will Jehovah receive that revenue of glory which is his due. To accomplish this, is an aim worthy the intelligence above, while it is that which our Lord places here in the foreground to command our hearts.

And *in its results*, how glorious does Jehovah appear, while man is made unspeakably blessed ? Let this kingdom come, and the heralds of the cross shall have unfurled the banner of the Lamb on every high place, and streaming from a thousand centres, the light of salvation shall irradiate every dark point. Truth shall have triumphed over error, holiness over sin, joy supplanted sorrow and sadness. Lisping infancy shall bring its early sacrifice, sprightly youth join its hosannas, the strength of manhood bow itself in adoration, while old age shall bless God and depart in peace. Let it come, and then he who bled on Calvary, and whose success up to this time is in sad contrast with the merit of his sacrifice, shall see of the travail of his soul in having the harvest of a world gathered to his feet, and having every knee bow and every tongue confess he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Let the kingdom come, and then mercy shall reign over a universe of guilty, helpless and wretched immortal beings. In the case of a single sinner, how does that word, " Go in peace, your sins are forgiven you," chase away a thousand fears, dispel the deepest gloom, and ease the aching heart ! how it illumines with hope, how it animates with joy ! What an era, when every dejected mind shall know its blessed

influence, and every bleeding bosom be staunched by it balm, and throughout the broad earth mercy, mercy shall reign! Let the kingdom, come, and righteousness shall fill the earth. Too long have men groaned under the dominion of iniquity in its various forms. Unjust lording of man over his fellow, the triumph of money and rank over right and principle, corruption, falsehood and imposture have had an influence most detrimental to human interests. What can be conceived more delightful than an era of principle; when every bosom, in every department of human society, shall know none but righteous feelings; when unbending integrity shall distinguish every member; when selfishness shall give place to that love which takes every man to its bosom as a brother, and the only rivalry shall be a rivalry in virtue!

Let the kingdom come; and, as its principles are at utter variance with every malevolent feeling, there shall be no more envy, nor disquiet, nor turmoil. Our world shall be no more harassed with the iron sceptre of the despot. No Genghis Khan, nor Tamerlane, nor royal, nor imperial murderers shall send their millions to an untimely grave. The spears shall be beaten into pruning hooks, and the swords into plough shares, and nations shall learn war no more. Let the kingdom come, and all are happy. The individual is happy, the family is happy, society is happy, and the world is happy. How glorious this series of results to Him who planned the scheme of mercy; who in the counsels of eternity had thoughts of mercy and purposes of peace; who has spread out his plans of good on the sacred page, and thus fulfills every promise on which the fathers trusted, and especially redeems the pledge given to the Messiah, "I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

Compare this with any other enterprise in which men have embarked their energies and have lavished their treasures. Compare it with all those which have so yoked national prowess to the car of war, and how large and glorious it looms!—God glorified and our race happy!—it exceeds all beside.

The appeal of our enterprise is to all of the man and all of the Christian in us; the development of heart to which it leads brings it into closer union with, while it secures greater likeness to the great source of all excellence. Well did our Lord place so high in the pleas of the devotional spirit this—Thy kingdom come. Can we well rate it too highly? Do we err in regarding it as comprehensive of all good?

You will remark again,

III. This object, of such vast moment, is commended as *one of common interest.* What an interesting position that of our Lord in the historic picture before us! What is he? The mere philosopher, the head of

some new school, propounding the theories by which he hopes to astonish the world? No. But the endeared friend, in the midst of the circle whose warmest affections cluster around him; the father in the midst of his beloved family circle, addressing them as having common interests, common duties, common aims. A common object carries them to the mercy seat; a common appellation is addressed to the glorious One to whom they look. Our Lord makes no distinctions, he marks no differences. The "our," and the "us," bring into beautiful unity before the throne all claiming to be disciples, however differing in the adventitious circumstances of the world. Thus "Thy kingdom come" is as directly and decidedly each one's, as "Our Father which art in heaven;" in other words, the coming of this kingdom is the great affair of the Christian family.

I do not see how we can draw any other conclusion. This is not our work as ministers; much as we may love it and cherish it and labor for it, it is not ours alone. One of the mistakes into which many seem to fall is, that the responsibility here rests specifically, if not entirely, on the ministry. Their share of interest is and should be large, but it can by no means be exclusive. We cannot lose sight of the family idea in this band of Christian brotherhood. The manner in which some shake off responsibility and leave the ministry alone, indicates an entirely wrong view of the place the officer occupies. The ministry is a merciful office, growing out of the infirmities of men; it is a *monitorial* agency. Its duty is explanation, appeal, expostulation, counsel, reminiscence. It is the mere helper. It necessarily involves the idea of other interests in addition to its own.

Nor is this work of interest only to missionaries. Devoted men, they plead to an absorbing feeling here, but we can allow them nothing of primary right beyond other members of our family. Their form of duty grows out of the necessities of the case. Yonder on our borders and beyond the ocean are the hundreds of millions among whom it is desirable this kingdom should come. But how shall they hear of it? How shall they understand and feel its claims, unless some one shall be its messenger to them? The inquiry is, "who will go for us, whom shall we send?" The missionary steps out to the foreground and responds, "Here am I, send me." Not that the missionary band have any more duty than any other member of the family circle, but they will be the agents in one form of duty required. We cannot accordingly fold our arms and talk admiringly of the devotion of this agent and say, 'Oh! the kingdom will come, the missionary is in the field.' Strictly, in the spirit of this prayer, an interest as deep and absorbing as that felt by him should be felt and cherished by every one who prays, "Our Father—hallowed be thy name—thy kingdom come."

Nor is this, again, the burden of a few zealous hearts gathering in little clusters among the churches. It is a burden put on every Christian heart by our divine Teacher. We have been wrong, sadly wrong on this point. The number in our churches is small, of those who entertain a deep and lively interest here. A mere handful in each church—perhaps composed of Christian sisters and few beside—or some master spirits in a missionary association lead the way and do the work. Contributions have come from various sources, very promiscuous indeed—but they have come in many a case, as of course, or because a special call was made. As for living, heartfelt interest, such interest as sends up the prayer which moves the arm of gracious omnipotence, where do you find it? Alas! with five of a hundred of the nominal members of the Christian household! Why must constant appeals be made? why special agencies traversing the field without cessation, if the true feeling is cherished? Why the deficiency in the means of this Board, if the church feels right?

Far be it from me to utter one word unjustly disparaging to the church in general. I cannot bring myself to think I do so, when giving this as fact. The church has not waked up—she has not begun to feel the interest called for and which she must feel if she becomes what the Great Head intended she should be—a missionary family—by giving such a model prayer. There must be the feeling of a common interest if we ever offer this petition aright. There is no one in the whole Christian circle, high or low, official or not, rich or poor, exempt here. Oh, how can any be listless! How can any one be unmoved, when an object of such vast moment is presented! If there be anything which can touch the inner man, anything which can break up the fountain of the soul's sympathies, it is here, and it is brought home directly by the Lord Jesus Christ to *every one's* bosom. Oh, where is the evidence of having laid our hearts on his altar, or of our breathing his spirit; where the consistency of our professions, or the integrity of our Christian character, if all our interest, or most of it, is given to that which is personal in this prayer; while that which first filled the heart of the Master, is regarded with comparative indifference? Let each of us, my dear brethren, in proportion as others may be remiss here, for himself cultivate a growing and controlling interest in this great work.

We cannot but remark again,

IV. That our Lord, by the very form in which he has put this matter, has made it *the duty of each one to labor* that this great object shall be accomplished.

No one will doubt a moment that this work, had God so pleased, might have been performed by the much shorter process of a special miracle. He who spake, and it was done, who said, Let there be light, and light was, could have scattered the light of life in ways we cannot conceive of, and established his kingdom in the hearts of all men. But he has been pleased to bring this matter under the control of the great principles on which he manages the world. Miracles have had their place, but his prevailing government is one of means. And we cannot but regard this as both wise and gracious in reference to this petition. It calls out and strengthens the very graces which more especially assimilate to himself, those whose cultivation ministers most to the happiness of the Christian here, and prepares for that which is to follow in the world to

come. It is a positive blessing to them to call them to labor. But can there be any mistake about their active co-operation with him? We think not. Can any mind for a moment think that all here is mere ceremonial? He must indeed have a low estimate of the Master, who only esteems him as here suggesting a mere form involving no feeling, no action, no corresponding conduct.

Is not the principle perfectly clear, that *a man is committed to that for which he prays?* Is not this, the principle of this prayer, applicable throughout? All grant that when we are taught to pray for our daily bread, we are not to expect a miracle to be performed, while we utter the prayer and sit inactively down. We all understand this petition as referring to a blessing on our lawful endeavors, to which we own ourselves bound as a means of obtaining the object of our desire. This is so plain, we are all ready to reprove one who may talk of throwing himself on Providence, while he does nothing for himself. There is no drawing distinctions here; we cannot thus reason concerning one part and not of another. The principle is the same; we bind ourselves, by the fact of praying, to every means of securing what we pray for.

Three questions here offer, if this be correct.

Who shall labor?—To what extent?—In what way?

These are most important questions. *Who is bound* to labor that the Kingdom may come? The simple answer is, he that is bound to pray that it may come. And who is he? He that should pray, "Give us this day," "Forgive." Every Christian, every man, that should do the one, is bound to do the other. They stand and fall together. Just as decidedly as *every man* is bound to pursue a lawful avocation for his livelihood, so is he bound to proper measures for the other petition. *How far* shall a man labor or to what extent? Precisely as in the other case, he is bound to employ fairly and honestly, to the utmost, every lawful and appointed means. And this must be his daily employment, to continue as long as he needs to pray for daily bread, or for God to secure his daily sustenance. These two must ever be taken together; for on successfully laboring for one depends the ability of laboring for the other.

Is it inquired in *what way* a person shall labor? The Scriptures inform us, when they refer to the instrumentality which is to bring about the triumph of Christ. The Truth is the great means of converting the soul. It is mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. This must be brought to bear upon the minds of all men, in order to its triumph over all. He who taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," has ordained, as the law of his church, that this truth shall be preached to every creature. Speaking thus, as the legislator of his Church, he has made obedience to it, a part of Christian morality. According to this view, *every Christian*, as a part of the church, has a share in the responsibility, and must either go himself, or send or support some one who will go in his behalf to spread it abroad; that is, he must be a missionary or send out and sustain him. The work must be done by the Church, and it involves, in the circumstances of the case, various forms of labor. There are languages to be acquired; the word of God is to be rendered into the tongues of those who are to be benefited by it. Many must go to them for these purposes, and life must be devoted to them. Now all cannot go; but there can be, while there is a common responsibility, a division of labor. Many may take the responsibility of the work abroad; but

then on those who tarry at home rests the inalienable obligation to sustain those that go. They can only contemplate them in the light of persons doing at very great sacrifice, a work which they must otherwise do themselves. To sustain, by pecuniary support, him who labors in the foreign field, loses thus the form of a charity and takes that of an obligation; and this is as extensive, be it borne in mind, as the duty to pray this petition.

All this is at variance with the view many take; but it is, in my judgment, the only true one. The missionary enterprise is assigned too low a place, when it is made only a graceful appendage of Christianity, or the means of calling out some scenic display of sympathy. It is made by the circumstances of the human family, or by the condition of the field to be cultivated—integral to Christian organization. By the will of the Master, a vast work is to be done. It is spread over the world's surface; and it is his will that every one who goes to the "throne of the heavenly grace," shall take an earnest active part in its accomplishment. Our devotion loses its proper character, if this is not carried out. Just as recreant to duty as any one would be, and as certainly inviting refusal at the hands of God, if he prayed for daily bread and labored not for it, or in other words used not the means to obtain it; so is a man recreant to duty who prays, 'Thy kingdom come,' and does not strenuously put forth every effort to secure its coming. Yes, as the man dishonors God and the mercy seat, who prays, 'Give us our bread day by day,' and does nothing; so is he guilty who prays, 'Thy kingdom come,' and leaves the work to other people. It is gross trifling; it is insulting God; it is trampling under foot the great principle of his government, using the instrumentality of men in answering their prayers, for any to pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' and fold his arms in indifference. He must *do something;* and the measure of what he does, must be governed by his circumstances or facilities for action. Would you not have it written with a diamond on every heart, *every one must do something under the dictation of an honest conscience?*

Finally you will remark,

V. *That for the entire success we must look to and depend on God.*

Why this petition, but to make every heart feel that we must look away from the arm of man and all his agencies to the special blessing of the Most High? This crowns all. And there is no point presented more strongly and frequently than this. How it runs through all the divine dispensations! "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord," is as true now as when originally penned. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase." It is delightful to see, how the records of the first missionary efforts—for such is the acts of the Apostles—present this precious truth. Those primitive laborers acted fully on the ground we have already taken, that there is a great work for the church to do, and yet referred all to God, and their joy was to acknowledge the hand of God in all. Yes, says Paul to the Romans, "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation." Fearfully he contended with the enemy at Ephesus, that head-quarters of Asiatic idolatry, and most successfully; and his joy after all is, that "you hath *he* quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Precious was the harvest at

Philippi; it began with this, "whose heart the Lord opened." Daily thanks he gave for the Thessalonians; and it was he who would have them remember "that the word of God came to them with power and the Holy Ghost."

With all our doings this must distinguish us in our humble and distant imitation of those good men. All must be done in the spirit of dependence, in the spirit of confiding, looking to God. It is his work and he will own it. There is nothing in this to enervate Christian effort. He has been but a poor scholar in the school of Christ, who relaxes his efforts because an absolute influence is not his and he must look to a higher hand. One of the sweetest sources of comfort to the experienced soul is, that he is entirely in God's hands; and one of his greatest encouragements is, that God reigns over all he does. He loves to lay all at the foot of the cross; and there it is our privilege to know our missionary brethren love to lie. We speak of primitive missionaries, and we should bless God that our own day furnishes precious illustrations of the same spirit. The probability is, that many of the most delightful examples of simple reliance on God, in our day, are found far away from us among our missionary brethren. Oh, surely we cannot any of us feel too deeply that all our dependance is on God; that for every step wisely taken, every measure efficiently carried out, every good impression made, every conversion into the kingdom of God, and every advance in our work, we are indebted to the divine blessing! And as we look forward, this is our hope. For what are we or the whole church unaided, to the difficulties to be overcome? Who has not wondered, and blessed God in the overflowings of his soul, at the manner in which the results already gained have exceeded the instrumentality employed.

What! Is the work God's? We are assured of its success; it will, it must succeed; for the Almighty has said it. We may have prudent, wise counsellors; we may have liberal churches; we may have learned and able and zealous missionaries, and for all these we will be thankful; but each will say, "I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. In God we boast all the day." Has he not put his seal to this good work in the most marked manner? Has he not shown that he was with us? Is it a small matter that upwards of two hundred thousand converted heathens have been gathered into the fold of Christ; that nation after nation has thrown its idols to the moles and the bats, and erected temples to his worship; that a vast population has been raised from the lowest degradation, both moral and social; that the light of truth has been carried into some of the darkest corners of the world; that the way is now prepared for the largest Christian beneficence to make itself felt on the destiny of the world? This is the Lord's doings; it is marvellous in our eyes; yet it is but the beginning of good, the first fruits of what we are warranted to expect. We have only to go forward in the spirit of Him who dictated this prayer, and we cannot fail. Tell not of failure here or there. In particular cases, special and temporary disadvantages may operate prejudically; but even these shall at length yield. Tell not of opposition. None could be fiercer and more determined than what was encountered by the primitive missionaries; and yet in three hundred years the coasts of the Mediterranean were studded with Christian churches. Our work is not done in a day, nor in a year, nor in a generation.

And yet we are warranted in anticipating great events, blessed results in our own time. The movements among the nations astonish us. God's hand is in them, and he seems to be preparing the way for what shall much more astonish and delight us. It is a great matter at such a time to be found at our post, ready to act worthy of the privileges we enjoy, and the blessed relation we sustain to the kingdom of our Lord.

Having contemplated the precious, the momentous truths conveyed by our Lord, let us go to our work with new determination. Having his warrant for and his estimate of this great work, being called to deeper interest, to active efforts under the most ample encouragement, we cannot hesitate. We seem to hear anew, coming from the most excellent Majesty, the command, "Say to Israel, Go forward."

Venerable Fathers, far on in your journey to the land where you shall rest from your labors, we would hear from you, with your latest breath this animating charge. Brethren in the vigor of life, and those just entering on the way, let us take up this cheering charge where these Fathers leave it, and let us join them, and help on the work of God. It is God's work, it is a blessed work, it will go on, whether we are faithful or not. But we will not, cannot consent to have it go on over us as obstacles in the way. We are united, we have one theme, LET THY KINGDOM COME.

SERMON CCCCLXXXV.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE ALUMNI OF ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, AT ANDOVER, SEPTEMBER 5, 1848.

BY REV. JOHN RICHARDS, D. D.

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THE DIFFICULTIES OF MINISTERS.

"He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."—*Rev.* 3 : 12.

TRIAL seems essential to a moral government. Possibly God might create moral agents and preserve them eternally in rectitude, without subjecting them to previous trial;—with God all things reasonable are possible. But neither reason nor the analogy of providence would lead us to this conclusion. It seems at first glance, more honorable to God to prepare moral agents for an eternal career by previous discipline, in which their own essential nature as moral agents, may be developed. To struggle with the difficulties peculiar to moral agency and overcome, magnifies God's workmanship. Exalted intelligences look with more admiration on a rational, immortal mind that has passed through trial and come out safe, than they can on any other work of creation. "Doth Job serve God for nought? Nay, he is a selfish, Belial-sort of a man; touch his substance or his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." But when Job came forth from the furnace whole, radiant in moral beauty, God was honored and Satan confounded.

Analogy leads to the like conclusion. Angels were put on probation. Some kept their first estate, and were confirmed in it: others kept not their first estate and fell, and are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. The man Christ Jesus was appointed to trial, to constitute him a faithful High-Priest and mighty Redeemer of his people. God has set forth, through all the path of time, pre-eminently good men as subjects to severe trial—Noah, Job, Abraham, David, Peter, Paul. Pre-eminence in piety is in proportion to trial. Everywhere we see trial, nowhere exemption. Why should we not conclude that trial is essential to moral government? "Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God," is doubtless a universal proposition. Let not our hearts rebel. The diversity of trial is striking. If there is occasion for wonder at the variety of God's works, in every department of natural history, there is as much in the variety of trial which he appoints. Every individual has his own, as well as those which are common; every class has its own, and every age its own. The circumstances of life are so infinitely various, they furnish ground for a corresponding variety in trial.

I am called to address you as a brotherhood, from a spot endeared by its object, its history, and our personal associations with it. In casting

about for a subject, my mind settled at length on the one suggested by the remarks already made—

THE DIFFICULTIES OF MINISTERS.

I invite your attention to a consideration of some of these, with an exhortation to constancy.

I. We are exposed to the idolatry of this world.

None of us, it is to be hoped, are so arrogant as to deny that he is assailable to this temptation, and probably none who do not account the actual experience of it among the difficulties which impede usefulness in the sacred calling. Yes, brethren, the vulgar love of wealth,—at least the susceptibility to it is in us; and in various degrees, each has occasion to acknowledge sin in this respect. Why should we not? The Devil, knowing that Christ was a man, took it for granted that this susceptibility was in Him, and therefore set Him on a pinnacle of the temple and showed Him all that wealth, and said, "This will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Our great leader and deliverer resisted the appeal then and ever; but the instructive and impressive fact stands, like letters graven in rock, for our constant admonition. The Redeemer was assailable but invincible: we are assailable and not invincible, and it is improbable that the adversary, having attacked the leader, will let alone his ministers.

Whether the present time exhibits to the world more overt sin among ministers in this respect than former periods, it might be invidious to say; and certainly I stand not here to accuse my brethren. But who can shut his eyes to the fact, that the temptations of this age are new and gorgeous. The equal distribution of property in our country which characterized the last century is very much disturbed, and the census of valuation is vastly increased. The representative of a hundred years ago, were he to revisit his former walks, would hardly know the localities—so changed the surface, the employments, the manners. Go into the dwellings; instead of the primeval utensils—the bare necessaries of republican life—there are carpets, soft sofas, paintings, vases, the indications of exuberant wealth. The facilities of travelling too have greatly multiplied, and where the minister could make an annual visit to his own youthful domicil, he can now go seven times to the metropolis, and once to Europe. Instead of passing through Vanity Fair once, many of us live in it. And they offer us its wares with amazing pertinacity and impudence. Now, it is a speculation in the pines of Maine, now in the building lots of a new city, now in the fifteen per cents of a manufactory or a railway, and again, the mines of Lake Superior. "Come, make an investment—'twill grow while you're sleeping. Why should the minister neglect to provide for his household, and so deny the faith and be worse than an infidel?"

We are not to expect this order of things to be reversed in our generation. Nor ought we to desire it simply to get away from temptations, for then must we needs go out of this world. And since God in His providence places us in the new circumstances, of which the fathers knew little, what is the path of duty? What but to set the face as a flint, and stand firm in *this* evil day? And when some men in the aforesaid city says, "Marry my daughter, and I will give her Babylonish garments and a dowry," let the voice be drowned rather in the echo of a deeper note, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Or if there is heard at frequent or at distant intervals a whisper, "Are you not

ashamed to be so poor?" and, "You cannot do any good, because you are so poor," and, "The Gospel does not forbid the use of riches, but only their abuse;" take it for granted that they three are so many lies, and say, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

If the providence of God calls any to the stewardship of much wealth, he should not refuse the trust; but meet its trials, encounter its temptations, bear its responsibilities. And yet if we might suppose any case in which a child of God were found deprecating a situation of trial, and saying, Lord, I am not afraid of poverty, or persecution, or sickness, or death, but I am afraid of the stewardship of much wealth,—if it be possible let that cup pass from me,—this surely would be a case in which we might suppose God would grant the petition in its terms. I have never classified the passages in the Bible which caution us against the desire of wealth and warn us of its temptations, so as to compare them with those which permit the possession and use of this world's substance; but it strikes me that the number and weight of the former are greatly in the preponderance. Christ was poor, and the first Christians were poor, and the Puritans were poor; and the excellence of the Christian religion has certainly shone out in its most attractive coloring, when her ministers have been poor in comparison with those around them.

Poverty indeed has its own trials—"Lest I be poor and steal"—lest in my want, I distrust that God who feeds the ravens—lest in the grinding necessities of the present hour, I lose sight of durable riches—the inheritance of faith. These temptations are incident to such a state, but not necessarily overpowering. They may even be converted into means of grace; for the antagonist motives are so obvious, and the contrasts which may be drawn so striking. "What if I am poor? shall I steal, when my Heavenly Father will so soon give me all things?" An argument from selfishness might counteract so direct a temptation, much more one from duty. Why did the Holy Spirit describe the new Jerusalem in such *material* splendors — each several gate of one pearl — streets as long (Rev. 21 : 16) as from here to Washington, paved with gold—was not one reason, to pour contempt on the splendor of this world?—that when we might be inclined to worship St. Peter's and not St. Peter's God, we might forthwith be ashamed?

Again, idolatrous regard to the honors of this world may surely be numbered among the difficulties of ministers. We have no direct line of promotion, like what is seen elsewhere. But there is one indirect, resulting from the nature of things; so that if we would escape temptation here, then must we needs go out of this world. "All men are *not* born free and equal"—the Senator from South Carolina is right to a certain extent. To one, God gives ten talents, to another five, to another one, to each according to his several abilities: and if we rebel against this ordinance of God, we peril our character for good sense, and act as foolishly as they do in France, or as they do in certain conventions which refuse a presiding officer. We might as well quarrel with the fluids in the chemist's tube of illustration, and say, "What right have the ether, the alcohol, and the oil, to raise themselves enviously above the water, the vitriol and the mercury?" But they will act just so, do what we will: if we shake them up and insist on equality, they will revert, each to his own station. And we are slow to learn this great law of nature, and conform to it with becoming deference. Generation succeeds generation, exhibiting substantially the same weaknesses. "Ye Moses and

Aaron! ye take too much on you:" "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." Diotrephes loveth the pre-eminence. And we are not yet in the millennial age, in which we believe grace will give extraordinary power to crush in the bud, the envyings and aspirings and disquietudes of a partially sanctified state.

What is it then, Brethren, but to gird on the gospel armor with zeal, to resist here the temptations which Satan is permitted to use? The motives are obvious. This is a path of difficulty, we cannot escape it by any lawful means, and he that walketh in his own strength will assuredly stumble. Let him acknowledge the difficulty and seek the requisite aids. "And He took a little child and set him in the midst, and said, except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." The same, said on a different occasion, and with a sublimity awful, "My kingdom is not of this world."

Brethren, imbued with the spirit of these precepts, and with the image of their Author clearly in view, who would seek a metropoli-station for its honor? or an academical chair, or a chief seat in any synagogue? "Lord, have I grace to bear the fire of its trials, faithfulness to keep the trust, ability to do its work?—let me not go unless there is truly need of *me*." Imbued with this spirit, who would covet an honorary degree?—horse-load of folly and sin, best of all illustrated by the old pictures of Bunyan's Pilgrim, before he reached the cross. Imbued with this spirit, how the vanity of authorship would flee away! It could not stand before the cross, any more than the bird of night can face the sun. And if the effect should be vastly to diminish the number of books, theworld might lose nothing.

II. Controversies on fundamental doctrines are among the difficulties of ministers.

Controversy may be an evil, or not; I agitate not that question. Controversy is not peculiar to this age; it has marked every age since the apostolic. But in relation to this brotherhood, compared with those who preceded the founding of this Seminary, it would seem that our difficulties were somewhat peculiar and increasing. For the latter half of the last century and a part of the present, the churches had, for the most part, peace. Some of us grew up to man's estate without knowing that there was debatable ground on many fundamental points,—at least within the bounds of our own denomination. But those times have gone by. We live in the midst of stirring controversy, on the Trinity, the Atonement, the work of the Holy Spirit, the nature of Sin, the foundation of virtue, the native character of man, eternal retributions. And some of the fathers and elder brethren say, there is a growing departure from the simplicity of the former faith, manifesting itself in preaching of less discrimination, in ecclesiastical measures of more than questionable propriety, and in general laxity in the tone of Christian morals, and they fear even this brotherhood is contributing to these evils.

Brethren, let me deny, as the organ of your unanimous acclamation, that this is so on our part. Let me say, the imputation, nay, the suspicion is injurious.

There is one God in three persons (hypostases), the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

The Logos became flesh, and dwelt among us, taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul.

Man in his beginning is entirely destitute of holiness—love to God.
He must be born again—of the Spirit.
The atonement is—vicarious.
The retributions of the last day are eternal.

Now, whatever discussions may exist in the airy regions of these pillars of Christian faith, however an adventurous Phæton here and there may drive his chariot zig-zag and wavy, now towards the North Pole, and now the South; now too near heaven for mortal eyes to bear, and now too near the earth; I will not believe that we are ready to forsake the beaten path that has conducted so many endeared names to the bright abodes, the happy seats. But it is to my purpose to say, that in these discussions we walk in difficult paths—in an atmosphere sometimes smoky and misty. And it is not surprising that some should see those radiants in whose light we have been instituted, as lighthouses in the dark distance. Nevertheless, let us be exhorted to constancy here. If it is a difficult path, hear the great leader when he speaks:—"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name from the book of life." And if any sees no difficulty or danger, let him, in the spirit of the little child set in the midst, inquire humbly before God, whether his confidence be vain or worthy. If worthy, the inquiry will not be vain, but add firmness. Brethren, when I contemplate myself as a rational soul, immortal, responsible, and of quick transit to its destination, I confess that I cherish, and feel myself instinctively moved to the ultra-fidianism of Sir Thomas Browne, rather than its contrary. I would risk the errors incidental to the reception of a mystery in a believing spirit, rather than the certain consequences of an inflated Sadduceeism. "My father, thou wilt forgive the errors of the believing spirit, and guide;" and, "What I know not now, I shall know hereafter."

We are reminded occasionally of the words of the venerable John Robinson, at Delft Haven. "More light is yet to break forth from God's holy word." How comprehensive, or with what limitations he spoke, it may be difficult now to determine. First, and chiefly, no doubt, he was thinking of church polity and the rights of Christians. But it is very doubtful if he meant to spread that oracle over the whole field of saving truth. It may be true, if he did not so intend. I hope it is so. I believe it is so, when I think of the millennium. But let us not abuse the oracle—let us beware, lest we put darkness for light, and mistake a comet for the sun—the beautiful evanescences of the kaleidoscope, for heaven's clear blue, with God's emblem in it. How good is the world? how pure is the church? how consecrate is the ministry? these are questions that have some relevancy. Is there so much righteousness as to warrant the expectation, that great light will break forth in our generation, or the next?—more piety, more light? But the reverse, not so, of course.

We read that the Greeks of the Orphic age, attributed an exalted character to Ερως, Love—progeny of Cœlus and Terra—ever present author of all good things to men. But the generations after, very considerably modified this hypostasis; and behold! a little winged boy with bow and arrows. And yet the Greeks of Anacreon's age boasted of superior light, and were emphatically seeking after wisdom. But as we look back on both, it is obvious that the former were more entitled to the boast of light. Nay, we see in the former, some last vanishing rays of the light of revelation, but over the latter, the pall of utter darkness. Something analogous to this may possibly happen in the Christian world, in the mysterious fluctuations of God's providence.

Brethren, the Bible *assumes* more, and more important things, than we are disposed to admit. Especially the grand fact of human nature fallen—entire sinfulness; the Bible assumes it, seldom argues it. Why not assume it? what lies on the face of things, what is attested to the world over, by unsophisticated conscience in its anguish—by the ceaseless smoke of expiatory sacrifices, needs no proof. "Ye must be born again," said Christ. He omitted the postulate, and began at the corollary. "Sir, I do not understand what you say." "What! Nicodemus, Rabbi, &c.; teacher in Israel! and knowest not these earthly things—so plain, that no revelation could make them plainer! how then understand if I should tell you of God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier?" That is, the truths of natural theology and revealed, are concentrated. Man's state—man's necessities—man's remedy. I am undone—I die with hunger—I want such a Saviour as the Bible presents; especially as he is seen in John's gospel, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the second and third chapters of the Apocalypse; and, admirably digested as to the doctrine, in the Assembly's Catechism. Whatever din, therefore, is heard in the polemical arena, let us hold on the more steadfastly to the simple truths which find a place in human consciousness and human wants. Whatever runs away from the words "Ye must be born again," and its obvious connexions, let us reject summarily, or lay up for the investigations of a more enlightened state. And if the way be difficult and perplexing, let us not murmur at the lot; for though we be cast into prison, and be tried, and have tribulation ten days, he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, saith, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

III. Another class of difficulties which God appoints to us of this age is, controversy and schism on points not fundamental.

The disease of a distorted vision has prevailed, as it were a mental epidemic. One perceives in secret societies the giant evil which is to confound all things into another chaos. Another perceives the same in the carnal licentiousness of the age. A third sees it in slavery, a fourth in an unscriptural form of church government, a fifth in the Papacy, a sixth in war, a seventh in intemperance. And each seems to think that if that particular development on which he has fixed his eye were removed, the whole cancer of this world's depravity would be eradicated. Hence, we are thrown into parties, factions, and cliques. One says, "Unless you will work with me, I will have no partnership with you: the energies of the whole church and the whole ministry are required at this point." He is replied to by another in the same spirit, and a new schism is begun. Protestantism, which should be a unity, is made fragmentary, almost without a bond; furnishing as it were, a new illustration of the infinite divisibility of matter.

By this unhappy mental epidemic, the most important interests of the Redeemer's kingdom are compromised and jeoparded. To feel it, we need to go back some thirty years, and recall the prospect as it then appeared, as well as to look back from the point we now occupy. With what faith, and hope, and confidence, did we contemplate the institution of our theological seminaries, the societies for the Bible, the heathen, the new settlements! How like breezes from the zephyr and perfumed with spices, were those influences which revived the churches by hundreds, and gathered us, so many, to this hill! But the scene, by inperceptible gradations, changed. Revivals, from the condition of healthful excitement,

put on the spasmodic; and ministers, unable to hold the head, were carried away by the violence of the unpropitious current. They cast the net into the sea, and gathered of every kind, but false to the analogy of the parable, they did not put the good into vessels and cast the bad away, but they put in the whole. Remonstrance was vain, and conservative men could only stand by in grief and say, "O Lord, how long!" This flagrant spirit, needing fresh combustibles for its sustenance, has ever since been changing its form and action. It has disturbed the church in all its efforts for good. I need not instance the Foreign Mission enterprize, and the Home, and the tendency of all things ecclesiastical now to amalgamate with things secular. Add to this, the homogeneousness of the New England element of population, if not vanishing, is fearfully impaired; furnishing new materials for schism to work upon. A bridge is built across the Atlantic, and Babel is coming fast; and if the great cauldron over there should continue to be stirred up for some time as now, there is no telling how spotted and patched we shall become; and what new powers of versatility we shall need, to meet circumstances so variant from those of our fathers.

These schisms and their accompaniments are serious difficulties. It is as unwise to under-rate them as to exaggerate them. Let us do neither; but forming as just an estimate of them as we can, consider them in the light of trials. We are thrown into them by the Providence of God. God, doubtless, sees it necessary for the best proving of His ministers and His church, that just such a state of things should exist. More glory will accrue to him in the end, by the temporary permission of such evils—by the transient success of the adversary in wielding these disturbing forces, than if all things went smoothly on. The individual Christian does not walk a great while in the land Beulah, where the birds sing and the air is balmy, before something occurs to interrupt and perplex. Neither does the assembled body of the Church,—variety of providence is as manifest here as in the case of the individual.

There is a still wider view. Who that attentively studies his own heart, or observes the members of his own Church,—who that contemplates the whole mass of partially sanctified mind, so far as he has been able to learn it from reading and observation, but is led often to exclaim, "What poor materials God has to make a church triumphant of! Is it possible that even God can construct that glorious New Jerusalem, adorned like a bride for her husband, out of such materials as this imperfect church on earth presents. O wonderful! most wonderful! It will fill infinite space and infinite time with a song—loud as the voice of many waters, and sweet as the harps of celestial bands.

Since then God throws us into this condition of schism and fruitless controversy, it is our part to stand firm and faithful here; not throwing off responsibility and charging God foolishly, but with meekness and sorrow acknowledging each his own share in producing the state of things which we deplore—still trust Him for His grace, His wisdom, and His mighty power. God, who brought the material world from its chaos, who brought the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, who does bring the individual sinner's heart from a ruin worse than chaos, is able to retrieve the moral ruin of the whole church. Every brotherhood of God's ministers, in every age has had to work in disorder, in the midst of what seemed impending ruin, and has had emphatically to live by faith. So must we.

IV. The last class of difficulties I mention is, the feeling of discourage-

ment to which we are exposed in view of the total complication of difficulties.

We enter on our work full of hope, as we ought. We hail every bright omen with joy; we permit not ourselves to believe the day will be overcast,—but the clouds do come. Although God gives the churches seasons of joy and prosperity, they pass away: the love of many waxes cold—apathy and worldliness creep over the churches. Here and there a standard-bearer faints and goes over to the enemy, or a cold auxiliary. Error, or what is closely allied, prevails extensively on fundamental points, and all former battles are to be waged again, though in different form. Idolatry of the world insinuates itself into sacred places, besides seizing hold of the masses with ruder grasp. The morals of the world seem suddenly sunk many degrees, and the church fraternizes with the world proportionately. Dissensions among brethren multiply and increase in acrimony. New England's homogeneousness diminishes, and the Jesuits, the devil's flying artillery, are on our flank, and in our rear, and wherever we did not expect they would be. Roused from our calm retreat we ascend a point of observation, and it seems as if the whole world had broken from her moorings, were now in the rapids, and now just ready to go over the fearful cataract, and plunge into the abyss. Anxious, we turn over the prophecies again, and inquire if we have utterly mistaken their drift. We thought the world was to have been converted by about this time, but surely the time is being deferred a good while yet. Newton, Faber, and others were surely mistaken about the year 1866; eighteen years is surely a short time for so much to be done, unless by miracle. And are we to expect a miraculous interposition?—are the wars and rumors of wars in church and state, now current, indications of a catastrophe near? and, must we stand still and await the development without participating much in it?

Brethren, if any of us are particularly exposed to such discouragements, let us consider two things:—First, the time for any one of us to work in God's vineyard is very short, compared with the periods which God chooses for the accomplishment of great events. Thirty years, if that were the average, is a very short period. No one man, and no one brotherhood ought to be disappointed, if he and his cotemporaries do not accomplish as much as youthful ardor projects and hopes for, and if the wheels of Providence do not move, in our limited vision, fast enough. It is a great world, a complicated world, a desperately wicked world. God has usually chosen long periods to accomplish *parts* of His designs. He, who by unreasonable hopes and fears, virtually requires God to issue things faster than He does, arrogates to himself an undue importance in the scheme of Divine providence, or he verges to an unworthy distrust of Almighty power and wisdom. He places himself in the position of the disciples, asking, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore unto us the kingdom?" and he should attentively consider the answer which the Lord of heaven and earth gave—"It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." Suppose one of us, in an unsubmissive, impatient hour, should find himself asking that same question—"Wilt thou at this time restore unto us the kingdom?" and a voice from heaven should reply, "No, not this thousand years yet." What would we say? with Jonah:—"Therefore, now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" or would we say, "Lord, I suppose thou hadst some great work for me to do, and lo! it is very

small and hardly to be accounted for!" Nay, we start back from such impiety, when we look it in the face. Let us equally do so when it comes round behind us, and whispers in the ear. Let us rather with Mills and Evarts and Cornelius, be doing with our might what our hand findeth to do, and continue faithful unto death.

The other point submitted for consideration is this: God has manifestly two great designs in view, or rather we may look at His one grand design from two *points* of view. He designs to save an innumerable multitude of our race. But in doing this, he employs the agency of men; and the discipline of each individual by trial and difficulty is one important article in this agency. He required Noah to spend several hundred years in the midst of a generation more perverse than any the world has seen since. He was to see the fear of God extinguished from all but his own family, notwithstanding his preaching. That Noah stood firm and faithful through such a discipline, has had no slight bearing on the world ever since. His hoary form stands like Andes, a warning to the wicked, an encouragement to the good. And so of that catalogue of Paul's, in Hebrews 11th. In addition to the bearing of their direct labors for the world's salvation, was the indirect influence of their example as seen through trials. By the latter, not only were they themselves prepared for heaven, but though dead they speak — speak by their example, while their lips are silent in the grave.

Now we are not to look on the world's conversion, abstracted from every thing else, as the only object for which we live, and contemplate solely our own direct labors for that object. If we attain to a place in the architecture of the heavens, we must be fitted for it here—hewn, polished, adapted—by the very trials God appoints. If one of these trials is the class of difficulties now under consideration—disappointment in view of prevailing wickedness, dissension, signs in heaven and earth, ominous of evil, as if through our misinterpretation of prophecy the golden age were retreating, not approaching—then let us receive the trial with cheerfulness and meet it with a great heart. Let the world see us erect and faithful unto the end. God will use such *faithfulness* as means to accomplish the great purposes of His grace, and it may be as directly as any other labor of our hands. We need not be careful and troubled about many things, pertaining to the detail of the grand issue, but rest with confidence in the great truth, God reigns—"just and true are thy ways, O thou King of Saints!"

Such, Brethren, are some of our trials—not all, but enough to show they are severe and endlessly diversified in their circumstances. Still the Great Leader who sends the messages to the Asiatic churches, and through them to us makes no allowance for severity nor for circumstances,—that is, as to the authority and absoluteness of the command. The command is, meet the trial, whatever its character, variety, severity, or duration. If it be inward temptation, meet it; if outward evil in the ordinary course of providence, meet it; if peculiar discouragement by the way, meet it; if persecution, meet it. If the course of trial be ten years, meet it; if protracted to three-score, meet it. In all circumstances stand firm, in the evil day of this probationary life. And be assured that the conflict must last till death shall give relief. But as to encouragements while in the conflict —these are abundant and most cheering. Those presented in the context may be reduced to three classes—direct aids, the example of the leader, and the final reward.

1st. *Direct aids.* To every church is given commendation, reproof, or

both, according to the spiritual condition of each, and with the impressive declaration "I know thy works." To every one he suggests such counsel, rebuke, and exhortation, as each in his peculiar circumstances needs. To one, "I have something against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works." To another, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou sayest I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing. But thou art in truth poor and wretched, and knowest it not. I counsel thee to prize the gold of this world less, and that which is mine to give, more." To another, words of affectionate commendation and encouragement: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Though the Devil cast some of you into prison, and ye have tribulation ten days, still be faithful even unto death. Do not deny my name, though death in horrid form be threatened. Be faithful, and I will give thee a crown of life." To another, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me—I will come and help him in the conflict—let him unbosom his cares to me, and I will share them with him."

Now with such aids, proffered by one who knows, who has all power to do, and tenderness to feel, and who has said under the sanction of His chosen title, Faithful and true Witness, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee"—with such aids, shall we complain under the conflict,—its variety, severity, or duration? How many thousands of this world's votaries bear hardship, to gain gold which perishes, or applause which evaporates, or a crown, earthly, and do not complain! Shall those who profess to be seeking gold tried in the fire, the approval of a heavenly theatre (Heb. 12 : 1), a crown of enduring life, complain, and with such aids?

2d. *Example of the Leader.* "To him that overcometh, will I give to sit down on my throne, *even as I overcame*, and am set down with my Father on his throne." Did He not have a conflict? Though God, He was yet man. As Mediator, Leader, Captain of our salvation, He was the MAN, Christ Jesus—He had a true body and a reasonable soul. We can never know in our mortal state, the details of that long temptation in the wilderness, alone. But we are told a little of its close. The Devil assailed him through an appetite. Could not the *man* Christ Jesus, feel the anguish of protracted hunger? Let us not merge the man Christ Jesus wholly in the exaltation of the divine nature? He could feel those pangs, worse than the rack and the flame. And here was an open door to the shafts of the great adversary. "Command these stones to be made bread, you who say you are the Son of God." And had not the man Christ Jesus a liability to ambition? He did not fall—"YET WITHOUT SIN" be it written—but had He not a liability? most certainly; and when the Devil said to Him, "Cast thyself down from this height—He shall send an angel and catch thee in His hands," was there no strong struggle in the inward soul? And, "I will give thee all this empire, outspread before us, for one easy prostration, nay, for one mental assent," was there no wrestling and fierce resistance? Let us not annihilate the human by looking only at the divine; nor let us overlook the daily contradiction of sinners against himself in the course of His ministry. Did He not every day endure a conflict, not with various success as we, but a real conflict, meeting continually a hail-storm of darts? If He did not more than any man, then it is contrary to the expectations we should form, considering Him the prototype and leader of a redeemed church, against whom, more than all that church com-

bined, Satan would have a special enmity and direct his mightiest strength. We have then not merely His sympathy, care, and aid in the conflict, but His example also. Jesus endured more contradiction of sinners than we—Jesus received more shafts from the armory of hell than we—Jesus suffered more pain of body and soul than we, and overcame them all. And it is not a small thing when He holds out to us that example — "even as I overcame."

3d. *The final reward.* The collation of the blessings in these messages is magnificently rich—"exceeding great and precious promises." Eat of the tree of life—not be hurt of the second death—eat of the hidden manna —not blot out his name from the book of life—shall go no more out, but have eternal citizenship—sit down on an eternal throne. They are figurative, but they are so necessarily, and instead of exaggerating the reality fall infinitely short. Oh! that we might receive with a believing spirit the truth involved, and conceive more worthily of the great reality.

Who then is grieving at his hard lot in the world, real or imaginary? Is it sickness, poverty, struggling for necessaries? Look away to the end of these labors. There, beyond this concave, so blue by day, so bespangled by night, lies a country more enchanting than Eden. It is the garden of God. No noxious tree grows there, bearing death and woe, but the tree of life. It shall give strength, not weakness; eternal, not temporary relish; an everlasting guard against the approach of sickness, pain, and death. To take of its fruits and eat to the full, no need of labor, care, and watching. It grows itself, watered by the river of God, and its life-giving power cannot be exhausted, nor its abundance drained, though millions upon millions feed upon it, ages eternal.

Who again is enduring the sharp conflict of direct temptation? Who feels himself daily solicited, and as it were drawn with a cord, to commit some direful sin or series of transgression? Let him, indeed, be afraid of the sin, but not disheartened at the temptation, nor entertain a thought of yielding. Let him not repine at his lot, that he is placed in a world of temptation, or that his circumstances are peculiar. Thousands have been in circumstances as trying and peculiar, and yet have come off conquerors. Let him look away to the city of the Great King. He that overcometh shall have the freedom of the New Jerusalem—the name of God, of his city, and of his dear Son inscribed upon him. To all the privileges of that city he shall be admitted, and angels and redeemed ones shall acknowledge him as a fellow-citizen of that city—he shall go no more out.

Who again may suffer a violent persecution (not impossible), called on to deny Christ's name under heavy penalties, even death? Grieve not, nor refuse such an allotment. The Great Leader has trodden this path too, and says, "He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death." Having himself met the first death and triumphed, he urges his own successful example. Who will slight it?

Such then are the aids, the example, the rewards. There is no discharge from the war in this world; but at death there is eternal discharge. Does three-score years seem a long service to gain rewards so great and so enduring? It is a very short period. Are the aids small? They are mighty through grace; not one who trusts them shall fail to come off conqueror. Are the instructions in the book of our discipline obscure? They are intelligible and very plain. Who then will faint in the conflict, and say, "I will give up and take the rest this world affords?" Will any? "No," let each reply with his whole soul; "Never," let all with united

voice respond, "We will not forego blessings so great, glory so enduring, for the sake of ease or respite so short and so unworthy. Come sickness, come poverty, come fightings from without or fightings within, come persecution, come death in terrific form, we will not give up the contest, nor deny Christ."

Brethren, let the associations of this day contribute to the confirmation of a purpose so worthy. It is pleasant to remember these places. This place of our worship, and first efforts in the pulpit—those halls of daily discipline—those alcoves with their portraits. It is pleasant to recall the anniversaries—each his own—to me, my own (1824). Brethren of that period, I think you have not forgotten a tall, muscular form, great contemner of Lord Chesterfield, great admirer of Hercules and his insignia, who from this place, as chief orator of the class, addressed the Rhetorical Society—his theme, "Liberty only through the gospel." Perhaps you may even remember his closing words.

"Be girding up your loins and taking to yourselves the whole armor of God. And when you go forth to fight your *short* battle for God and man, may he go with you; and when you are called off from the contest, may he receive you to himself and his blessedness." *

Short, truly, his own battle in the cause he loved; thirty moons wasted, and himself called off. I will not speak of the hopes frustrated in his death: 'Maximo suorum, et bonorum omnium desiderio mortem obiit.' I will speak only of the last circumstance of his death, for the sake of my closing thought. He was absent from his paternal roof when the last bleeding seized him; but he could not die away from his home. Almost in a dying state, they placed him in a sleigh and drove him rapidly twenty miles. Borne under the accustomed roof, he saluted and kissed each member of the household circle, and immediately died. O wonderful power of that word HOME! and sweetest emblem of the eternal home! "In my Father's house are many mansions." Brethren, shall we all get there at last—east, west, north and south, from the cannibals of Sumatra, from the pirates of the China sea, from Oregon's savages, from intestine feuds, from the universal bitterness of this bitter world—shall we all at length get home? Fathers, Juniors, Cotemporaries, whole Brotherhood at once! shall we all at length get HOME? "He that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." Amen.

* Memoir of Samuel H. Cowles, Christian Spectator, Jan. 1828, p. 16.

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BY REV. ASA D. SMITH,

PASTOR OF THE BRAINERD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK.

IMPORTANCE OF A SCRIPTURAL MINISTRY.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—II. TIMOTHY, 3: 16, 17.

BY the term "scripture" here, the Books of the Old Testament—those accredited by the Jews, and with which Timothy was early familiar—were doubtless primarily intended. Yet is the text, in its spirit, quite as applicable to the New Testament; and it may be taken as embracing the whole completed canon. "The man of God" is the minister of the Gospel; and it is with reference to him, the Bible is here commended. Inspired of God, it is precious to all; but in the work to which he is called, it has a peculiar and transcendent value. It meets all the demands of that work. It is profitable for "doctrine," or the unfolding of divine truth; for "reproof," or the confutation of error; for "correction," or the rebuke of evil practices; for "instruction in righteousness," or in the whole course of Christian duty. By it—and by it alone—is the man of God made "perfect," or, as the word is explained in the subsequent clause, "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." We depart not, then, from the scope of the text, nor overlook nor misapply one of its particulars, when we derive from it the subject of discourse assigned by the Synod to this evening—"THE IMPORTANCE OF A SCRIPTURAL MINISTRY."

I. But what mean we, it is well that we inquire, at the outset, somewhat particularly, by a scriptural ministry? There may be, there is often, mistake on this point. We touch not, on the present occasion, the *warrant* of the ministry; we concern ourselves rather with its *functions*. The inquiry now in hand is, not *who* may minister, but *how* they should minister. The general answer is, scripturally;—for all their work they are to be furnished from the full armory, the exhaustless storehouse of the divine word. They are to be emphatically *ministers of the word*—not of form—not of tradition—not of philosophy—not of the dogmas of men. The word is to abide, first of all, in their *hearts*. Truly scriptural preaching can come only of scriptural experience—an experience produced by God's truth, and of that truth the very transcript. Evermore, "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." The preacher, too, should in *understanding* and *memory* be "mighty in the scriptures." How else shall either the matter or the manner of his discourse be scriptural? From the word are his *doctrines* to be drawn. That he should deem the sufficient and only rule both of faith and practice. He is to bow reverently to its decisions; where it goes, he is to follow—where it stops, he is to stop. What it leaves unrevealed, he may be assured, is either unknowable, or need not be known. Nor is it enough that truth is exhibited by the preacher; it should be exhibited *as* God's truth—just as it lies in his word. His *themes* are to be drawn as directly as possible from the Bible—in the organic forms they take there, rather than as vague and inapprehensible metaphysical abstractions. His *analyses* should be not fanciful or unintelligibly subtle, but either such as the scripture suggests, or as find in it a warrant and a counterpart. The bread of life is to be held forth as God has provided it—not as decomposed. The *proofs* of doctrine, the ties which bind it to the conscience and the heart, are to be fabricated, not of the moonbeams of fancy, or the gossamer of philosophy, but of the adamant of eternal truth. The seal of all his utterances must be a "Thus saith the Lord;" not merely in his own thoughts, but as manifest to the people. His *illustrations* even, he will borrow largely from the Bible. Walking in its ample and wondrous galleries, he will point you, now to a portrait of some evil passion—now to a living model of some Christian virtue; now to a pictured scene of sin's fearful issues—now to a glorious panorama of the triumphs of faith.

Such a preacher is apt to abound in *expository* discourse. In this, he is most likely to present truth *as it is*—in its proportions, shapes, hues, relations;—not as "a dried specimen," but in living beauty; not as a dissevered member, but in its organic connections; not as a single stone from the edifice, but as a perfect and glorious whole. He is most likely, also, to hold it forth *as God's*,

and to hide himself behind its ineffable majesty. Said that prince of pulpit expositors, the late Rev. Dr. Mason, as he gave his farewell counsels to his people, "Do not choose a man who always preaches on insulated texts." Such preachers are not apt to bring out the whole counsel of God; however undesignedly, they will almost certainly keep back some things that are profitable to the people. There is, indeed, a sort of exposition which, with a great show of scripturalness, has little of the reality. Let it not be confounded with that we commend. "There is a *caro* and *spiritus*," says Cudworth, "a flesh and a spirit, a body and a soul, in all the writings of the scriptures. It is but the flesh and body of divine truths that is printed upon paper; which many moths of books and libraries do only feed upon; many walking skeletons of knowledge that bury and entomb truths in the living sepulchres of their souls do only converse with; such as never did anything else but pick at the mere bark and rind of truths, and crack the shells of them." Fitly does this set forth not a little of the scientific and technical "exegesis" of modern times. The hermeneutical apparatus of many an eminent critic, seems to have been specially suited to press out of a text, however unctuous, however it may have nourished the faith and hope of confessors and martyrs, its very life and marrow. As you turn, for example, from the rich and eminently scriptural pages of Luther on the Galatians, to many of the commentaries of his more recent countrymen—not to speak of certain Anglo-Saxon expositors—it is like passing from the Garden of Eden into Ezekiel's valley of vision. The bones there are "very many," and, "lo! they are very dry." There is neither sinew, nor flesh, nor skin upon them, nor breath in them.

To complete the outline of the scriptural preacher, we may add, that from the sacred text he *quotes* freely, not for proof only, as has been already noted, but for enforcement and adornment. Many a precedent for this has he, both in the apostolic writings and in the discourses of our Lord. His pages are resplendent with the gems of inspiration; in his noblest paragraphs they shine out—as they could not fail to do in the most eloquent of human compositions—"as apples of gold in pictures of silver." Nor does he scruple to blend with his own diction, not only for the purpose of exact statement, but of felicitous and impressive allusion, *scripture phraseology*. He is not ignorant of the cry of *cant* which so many have raised, from the courtiers of the merry Charle to the free-thinking Hume, and from Hume to the semi-sceptical Foster. Even "one John Milton," as Whitlocke called him, Hume declares to be not wholly free "from the cant of former times." It was not the classical and mythological cant of the Paradise Lost he blames, but the evangelic language, or rather the evangelic thought. All sorts of cant are tolerated by these

super-tasteful critics, but what they are pleased to call religious cant. From the miserable legends of heathenism, from the fictions of the ancient classics, from the modern epic poet, and dramatist, and novelist even, you may derive not only the frequent quotation, but many a peculiar turn of your own diction; and you are not only free from censure, but sure of commendation. Homer, Virgil, Milton, Shakspeare, Walter Scott, these all are supposed to be familiar with; these are universal models and authorities. But the Book of God—the Book of all nations and all times—the Book of eternity—this belongs only to a class—this is understood only by the *religionists;* the style that savors much of this, is but "a Babylonish dialect." The aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion, of which John Foster discourses with so much good sense in some respects, is an aversion not so much to the drapery, as to the living form—not so much to peculiarities of language, as to peculiarities of sense—peculiarities of which the phraseology condemned is often the most exact embodiment. It is not a truly refined taste that is offended, so much as a deeply depraved heart. To think of propitiating such a heart by substituting for a Biblical a courtly and classic phraseology, were about as great folly as if Cromwell and his hosts, in the terrible battle of Dunbar, instead of sounding out, in sublime concert, the hundred and seventeenth Psalm, had daintily chaunted forth some roundelay of the Cavaliers. There is a vein of naturalism in Foster's views on this subject, which had a fitting development in his notions of future retribution; and which the truly scriptural preacher will heartily eschew. He will not be careful to answer the critics in this matter; he will think much, and make much, of "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." He will rejoice if, in the very form and pressure of his speech, there be traces of the scriptural style—indications that his thought has been cast in the moulds of inspiration—associations with the divine, potent over human hearts.

We subjoin, only, that in his private labors, the Bible is his great thesaurus. In conference with the disorderly, the backsliding, the tempted, the desponding, the inquiring—in the chamber of sickness, at the bed of death, in the circle of mourners—he values, more than a thousand poor words of his own, a few apposite words from the Book of God. Everywhere, in fine, both in public and in private, he speaks as though God did beseech men by him—as uttering not his own wisdom, but God's—as being simply, according to our brief but comprehensive definition at the outset—a Minister of the Word.

II. Such, very imperfectly set forth, is the Ministry to which our text points. We come next to treat of its importance. This

is apparent in relation to *the Minister himself*—to *the structure of his discourse*—and to *its effect on the people.*

1. *In relation to the Preacher himself.* He should so preach as to save himself, not merely for his own soul's sake, but that he may the more surely save those who hear him. Even his intellectual advancement is important; and nothing is so conducive to this, as the profound study of the Bible. Nothing so tasks mind, nothing so arouses and invigorates it. Divine truth, indeed, as presented second-hand, may have something of this influence; but the depths of the human author are soon fathomed, the depths of inspiration never. It stirs up the mental powers to commune with a gifted finite mind. How much more to commune with that Infinite Mind, in whose eternal fulness are embosomed the types of all good and true thought, of all being actual or possible! What breadth of understanding comes of such communion! Much industry may be requisite, and a measure of logic, to gather a system of theology from the teachings of men; but far more to think it out from the Bible, to explore independently the sources of truth, to make from the primitive material one's own combinations. He who thus brings forth truth, does it, too, with a most comfortable confidence. When uttering mainly his own or other men's speculations, he is hardly free at all points from misgiving. But when cleaving closely to the divine word, he knows what he affirms. It is not the shifting sand he feels beneath his feet, or the trembling earth, but the moveless rock. And there comes to his soul what is far more important than any merely intellectual advantage, a potent purifying influence. Truth is the objective ground of all holy emotion—it is by the truth all God's people are sanctified. How then can he fail to grow rapidly in grace, who, according to the pattern we have set forth, is a student, and a minister of truth—whose mind it permeates, a part of whose very self it becomes, and of whose communications with others it forms a main element? As he feeds the flock of God, liberally is his own soul fed. Abiding in the region of the divine, he becomes more and more acclimated, he feels more and more truth's assimilating and transforming power. "With open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," he is "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." No more efficient means could be devised, my brethren, to raise the tone of piety in the sacred office, than to bring about a higher degree of scripturalness in the discharge of all its functions, and, as involved in this, a closer intimacy with the divine word. When the ministers of the Gospel are eminently Bible-men, then, and then only, are they eminently spiritual men.

2. Nor is the importance of scripturalness in the preacher less apparent as we pass next to *the structure and cast of his discourse.* This has been already set forth in general; our design now is to

glance at a few particulars, or to show, in other words, that in the sort of preaching insisted on, there will be combined all the elements of profitable and powerful discourse.

This might be presumed from the fact that the Bible is taken as a model. Little as we know of the human mind, and of the best method of reaching its hidden springs, and touching its mystic chords, it is no wonder there has been much debate about the right manner of preaching, and many practical mistakes and failures withal. But God made the mind; God knows its every principle of attraction and repulsion—its inmost chambers and its lowest depths. And *for* the mind—suited to it as light to the eye, or as music to the ear—he made the Bible. He made it not for one mind, but for all minds. It is God's great sermon—or book of sermons—to the human race. It is the discourse of the Infinite Rhetorician, and to all human rhetoricians—not only for substance, but as to all leading points of manner—a perfect pattern. The more you preach as God preaches, not only the truer, but the more eloquent is your discourse. Hardly a greater desideratum is there, in our schools of the prophets, than a book of sacred rhetoric, drawn inductively from the Bible. Such a book would cast into the shade all other works of the kind.

But, passing to the particulars we had in mind, the discourse of the scriptural preacher will be distinguished, first, by its *soundness*. This is, of course, its most valuable attribute. He will preach the truth, the whole truth, the truth exactly; he will corrupt not, warp not, color not. Excellence of manner, else, were of little consequence. This purity of doctrine comes only from a close adherence to the word of God. From what other source can the gospel minister gather the matter of his teaching? Christianity is a revelation—it is found only on the pages of the Bible—though reasonable, it is not *of* reason. The field of Inspiration is the Goshen, where alone is light; all without is thick darkness. Even what is called natural theology is little indebted to fallen and corrupt nature; its truths may be mainly traced back to revelation. They are the echoes of voices from heaven heard of old in Eden, or in the dwellings of the patriarchs, or from the mount that burned. Nay what the human mind claims to originate, is often borrowed directly, though unconsciously, from the completed canon of scripture.

Christianity, besides, is not only above, but against nature. Need enough there were of keeping close to Inspiration, if all its truths, profound and mysterious as many of them are, were in harmony with the human heart. But the depraved heart likes them not. If it corrupts them not intentionally, it is yet apt to do it unconsciously. Even the preacher is in danger of this; a secret tendency to error there is in the best of men. The humbling doctrines of the Bible, how likely to be somewhat modified! Its mysteries, for example, how prone is the pride of intellect either to repudiate

them, or to explain them away! What a distortion of truth has sometimes resulted from the inordinate love of system! How have the plain and simple verities of Revelation been strained out of shape, yea, metamorphosed into error, in accommodation to some cherished theory! A benevolence has been inculcated more disinterested than that the law enjoins—a submission to God little better than rank enmity. What havoc has been made of the faith by philosophical subtlety—by nice analyses, and transcendental refinements, and specious and captivating generalizations!

As you look over the writings of those who in these and other ways depart from the truth, you will almost always be struck with their want of scripturalness. True, they sometimes show great industry and expertness in wresting scripture; but more commonly they have little to do with it. There is no savor of it in their style. It is seldom quoted, whether for illustration or for proof. They have evidently walked more in the groves of the Academy than by the sea of Tiberias, or in the way to Bethany; they have listened oftener at the porch of philosophy, than at the gate of heavenly wisdom. You think, as you read, of Sabellius rather than John, of Schleiermacher, or Strauss, or Swedenborg, or Madame Guyon, rather than Paul. You cannot resist the impression, that it is their own logic they are resting on, rather than the word of God—their own speculations they are holding forth, rather than the mind of the Spirit. The Bible seems to teach, for instance, the resurrection of the body—in the plainest language it does teach it. But science is wiser than what is clearly written. It sees not how the dead are raised up, or "with what body" they come; and so it affirms, that when men die "the resurrection is passed already, and overthrows the faith of some." The Bible appears to teach, and good men in every age have received, the doctrine of the Trinity. But eagle-eyed philosophy has taken the matter in hand; it has found difficulties in the old faith, and it has fabricated a better. The old proof-texts need not trouble us; if noticed at all, there are metaphysical solvents in readiness, which will speedily dispose of them. A sort of Trinity is indeed left us. But it has been discovered in Germany, and echoed in America, that when the heavens and the earth are dissolved, it is not improbable it will be dissolved with them! Much do such theologues prate of the spirit of the age, and of progress. But the only spirit on which God smiles, is the spirit of profound reverence for inspiration; the only real progress, is progress in the knowledge of his word. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?"

Another element of excellence in the sort of preaching for which we plead, is its *spirituality*. By that only is the human spirit savingly affected. But that may be lacking, even when there

is no denial of fundamental truth. The themes of the preacher may be at fault. He may dwell mainly on the mere ethics of Christianity; and these may be presented, not in the evangelic, but rather in the pagan shape. Of many a man may it be said—

"How oft, when Paul has served him for a text,
Has Plato, Tully, Epictetus preached."

The forms of Christianity—its mere drapery—may be made unduly prominent. Political matters may be improperly introduced, or matters of mere temporal advantage. Subjects of discourse sometimes find their way into the pulpit, hardly more spiritual than if the preacher had held forth on roads and aqueducts. Some singular outrè topic may be selected; curiosity may be catered for, rather than the conscience and the heart. A theologico-literary theme may be introduced—a topic for mere entertainment. Pulpit divertisements have in our times become much too frequent for the good of the church. If the theme be ever so spiritual, the manner of treating it may be objectionable. You may listen only to cold logic, intangible abstractions, or mere sentiment and imagination. Or, in the abundance of a certain sort of "illustration," you may almost fancy yourself to be hearing a running commentary on the Percy Anecdotes. The great spiritualities of the gospel may be well nigh buried out of sight. Now, from these and other unspiritual modes of preaching, the truly scriptural minister will be delivered. "The words that I speak unto you," says our Lord, "they are spirit and they are life." In lower degree, yet certainly, will that discourse be spirit and life, of which the words of Christ are at once the material and the model.

As nearly allied to spirituality, we may mention next *simplicity*. This is of two sorts—simplicity of thought and simplicity of language. For the purpose of impression, simplicity of *thought* is important. Neither discourse excessively analytic, nor a metaphysical representation of truth, has much effect on the common people.

"The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed."

To move them, you must deal with aspects rather than with essences, with organisms rather than atoms; you must enact the painter or the historian, rather than the philosopher. And just this is the method of the Bible—the method especially of Him who spake as never man spake. True, in one sense, the Bible is eminently metaphysical; but in another and more common sense, it is one of the least metaphysical books in the world. It deals chiefly with simple verities, in their simplest forms. On a thousand points, which have called forth ponderous and profitless tomes of human speculation, it affirms and enjoins rather than

explains; or, if it explains, it is by convenient synonyms, by easy and apprehensible comparisons. Not from recondite matters does it borrow its illustrations, but from the most obvious objects of nature, or the commonest scenes of life.

Nor is simplicity of thought alone to be learned from the Bible; it teaches also true simplicity of *language*. Not that it lacks beauty or sublimity; in these points it has no parallel. To beauty and sublimity, indeed, in their highest forms, true simplicity is essential—that simplicity which is the opposite of artifice, affectation, verbal confusion and obscurity, and every species of mannerism. From the rage for fine writing, which has sprung up in these days of high civilization, the pulpit is unhappily not always free. It has an ambitious glitter, at times, a gaudy and cumbersome efflorescence, for the correction of which nothing is more effective than intimate communion with scripture models. In the Bible, how obviously is thought first and style last; how is style, rather, naturally evolved from thought—how does it *grow* out of it, consubstantial with it, as the rind upon the plant, or the bark upon the forest tree. Who can imagine the apostle Paul thinking how he shall write a fine sounding paragraph, or Isaiah how he shall verbally polish and ornament a prophecy? The style is instinct with thought — it is but a transparency through which thought shines.

To no other book is the general literature of our mother tongue so much indebted, as to the standard version of the Bible. No other book has contributed so much to form the best qualities in the style of our best preachers and theological writers. Take, as one of the most striking illustrations of this, John Bunyan. Whence came that purity of diction, that beautiful simplicity and naturalness, which have made the Pilgrim's Progress a favorite with all classes of readers in all Christendom? Not from the rules of rhetoric; for of these he had little knowledge. Not from a large acquaintance with literature; he was emphatically "a man of one book." It was from that intense study of the Bible, and that intimate acquaintance with it, to which his deep and absorbing experiences led him. When he lay "trembling under the mighty hand of God, continually torn and rent by the thundering of His justice," this made him, he says, "with careful heart and watchful eye, with great fearfulness, to turn over every leaf, and with much diligence, mixed with trembling, to consider every sentence, together with its natural force and latitude." How could the habit thus formed, a habit he lost not in brighter days, fail to affect powerfully, not his thought alone, but the dress it assumed?

Another excellence likely to be attained by the scriptural preacher is *originality*. We mean not by this that he will invent new truths. It may be said of the spiritual as well as the natural

creation, that "the heavens and the earth are finished, and all the host of them." There is much justice in the remark, "He who seeks novelties will be sure to preach fancies." What we mean by originality is, the presenting of old truths in new relations, or in a new light. It is the utterance of one's own thoughts in one's own way, and with that freshness which ever attaches itself to the free action of mind, to the full development of one's idiosyncracy. Let it not be thought, that looking at the Bible as a model hinders originality. As well might it be hindered in the painter or the statuary, by the study of nature, or of the galleries of Versailles, or Florence, or Rome. If there be aught of creative power in the soul, nothing so effectually stirs it up as a model. Rules may form mediocrity—models awaken genius. Originality in all human science, it may be further noted, comes of resorting to its sources, its primordial elements. A mere copyist is he, for example, who writes a history of the Reformation from the perusal of Mosheim and Milner, or who adopts, with little or no observation, or attention to his own consciousness, a theory of volition from Brown or Stewart. He who begins with principles, on the other hand, or primary facts or proofs, must be original. So is it with him who goes directly to the Bible for his theology. If any fabric be reared it must be his own. Who can doubt that, if, instead of that substantial reiteration of the comments and systems of others, which forms the staple of so many pulpit productions, the scriptures were primarily resorted to, and solely relied on, there would be a great gain, in point at once of freshness and impressiveness?

From such a method of study and composition, we remark further, there would result the excellent attribute of *fulness*. Not a plethora of words; of these there is seldom a lack. It is a fulness of thought we mean. "Reading," says Lord Bacon, "maketh a full man;" but there is no reading in this respect like the reading of the scriptures. There is not merely in them "the seeds of things," but the seeds of *all* things. Gather together all the theological libraries of ancient and modern times; and so far as you have anything of truth before you, it is all to be found within the lids of the Bible. The scriptures, too, are wonderfully suggestive. We say not, with the rabbins, that there hang mountains of sense on every letter; but we may say, there are volumes of sense in every line. Simple as the Bible is—a Book of principles—its paragraphs and sentences cannot but have innumerable relations. Select whatever theme you please, and go to the scriptures for the passages which bear upon it; and how shall one text suggest another, and each suggest some new thought; and how, as you dwell upon the thronging elements of discourse, shall they crystalize into beautiful forms of ratiocination or illustration. The suggestiveness of the Bible is truly philosophical. It is a

wonderful fabric, "fitly compacted together by that which every joint supplieth." As you follow out the affinities of truth there will result, not a heterogeneous conglomeration, but a living, perfect organism. It will be not so much a process of building, as of growth from a germ. Greatly thus is the work of composition facilitated. Instead of wearily tasking himself to say something, the preacher will always have something to say. Around his theme apposite texts shall cluster, and apposite thoughts; they shall, "like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in well ordered files as he could wish, fall aptly into their own places." Nor need we fear that the Book of Revelation, any more than the book of nature, will be exhausted. As, to the finer and still finer telescope, star after star shines out in the sky, so shall it ever be in the heaven of God's truth, to the eye of studious faith.

To the quality of fulness, that of *variety* is intimately allied. It has been well remarked, that a metaphysical way of speech soon exhausts the circle of sacred topics. Reduce the objects of the material world to their ultimate elements, or even to genera and species, and these are soon told, and will soon, as reiterated, become wearisome. But we never tire of nature's forms just as she presents them. Infinitely diversified, and ever new and delightful, is her broad landscape. So with the truth of God. Reduce it to essences and classified abstractions—confine yourself as in such case you must, to a narrow round of philosophical dogmas—and your themes soon become familiar and powerless. Who has not noted the sameness of certain metaphysical preachers? But lead forth your people among the deep valleys and high hills, the murmuring brooks and broad rivers, the variegated plains, and the many-hued forests—amid all the boundless diversity of the world of Revelation—and their interest shall never flag. There is no class of human relations or human duties, which the Bible does not touch—no possible conjuncture of human circumstances but it meets—no phase of human character but it sets forth—no field of appropriate illustration whence it draws not its materials. Though the same truth is exhibited thousands of times, it is yet never the same. These many presentations, like the leaves of the forest tree, or the spires of grass, or the faces of men, though all alike, are yet all unlike. So will it be with the presentations of him who makes the Bible his study and his model.

We might speak, also, of the *directness* and *boldness* to be learned from the scriptures, so much more effective than a periphrastic, essay-like, timid fashion of speech. We might advert to the power of the Bible, fully possessing the preacher, in promoting *life and fervor in delivery*. We might dwell on the relations of a scriptural habit to that quality called *tact*— a quality so essential to wise and profitable ministrations, whether public or private.

Who so likely to understand human nature, as the man who studies profoundly those pictures of it which God has drawn? Who so apt to be discreet and prudent, as the man who addicts himself continually to divine wisdom, who meditates constantly on those patterns of well-judged and faithful ministration which the Bible presents? But leaving these points, we must pass to glance at one other important characteristic of scriptural discourse, its *symmetry*. We mean not the symmetry of a single sermon, though on that point much might be said; but the symmetry of one's whole teaching—of the total impression made.

On this point, there is often great deficiency—deficiency by reason of which there is a great curtailment of usefulness. To a symmetrical ministry it is essential, that the several parts of our compound nature should be addressed in due proportion. Yet how often is the intellect almost solely appealed to, while the heart is left untouched, and the conscience sleeps. Not unfrequently, again, are the feelings only dealt with; so that if any sort of piety result, it will be unintelligent and fitful. Nor is it a strange thing to meet with a preacher, who perpetually belabors the conscience, as if man had nothing else, or as if that could repent and believe; as if the utmost working of conscience would transcend the religion of devils; or as if to be perpetually dealing blows at it, were not the sure way to hammer it into hardness. Here, again, is a man whose preaching is almost exclusively subjective. If he arouse thought in his hearers at all, it is only to keep it in that narrow sphere, their own polluted and miserable selves. Here is another who is too entirely objective. So little has he to do with human consciousness and experience, that his people almost forget that truth is at all concerned with them. They come to regard it as something to be known rather than possessed, to be looked at rather than felt. Here is a preacher intent only on outside cleansing; here another, who neglecting that, dwells only on inward excellence. Here is one wholly absorbed in what he calls *progress*—a troublesome ultra-radical; here another intent only on holding back—a hardly less troublesome ultra-conservative. Now, without specifying further, nothing tends so to counteract and correct all extremes as addictedness to God's word. In that there is nothing one-sided—no malformation of doctrine; but, as in the works of God, there is everywhere a just proportion, a beautiful and glorious symmetry. Symmetrical will be his preaching, who in the temper of his heart, and in the shaping of his thought, bears the deep and distinct impress of the Bible.

3. Such are some of the elements of excellence which will be more or less manifest in the truly scriptural minister's discourse. We pass to speak briefly, in conclusion, of *the effect of that discourse on the people*. On this point, indeed, the remarks under the preceding head had all a bearing. But there are other things

worthy of a succinct notice. It is one effect of such preaching that it leads the people to exalt, not the preacher, but God's word. If they see that he studies it much, it will lead them to study it much. If they perceive that to him it is the end of all controversy, and the chief of all knowledge, so will it be to them. "There shall be like people, like priest." And surely a higher service can hardly be done, than to enthrone the Bible in the love and reverence of a community. The scriptural preacher will speak, too, with *authority*. His hearers will feel that, a worm though he is, it is God who speaks through him; and to the voice divine the conscience will respond. To the spiritually-minded such preaching is peculiarly grateful—nothing else satisfies them. With the devout Mrs. Graham, they often sigh for more of "the italics" in sermons. Or, failing to be fed, they may feel that something is wanting, hardly able to tell what. There is, indeed, no ministry so sure, as that we commend, to be generally acceptable—in all places and among all classes, with the high and the low, the learned and the unlearned. Were there more of the Bible in our pulpits, there would probably be less change there. The bonds which bind a minister and his people together, are in no way so fastened as by the iron rivets of the word. True, a man quite deficient in this respect may sometimes be greatly admired. Men may talk, as they leave the house of God, of his fine gestures, or fine tones, or fine figures, or fine philosophy. He may be unto them as "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument." They may deem that he is the preacher, and that all good preaching will die with him. But how little thought do they take of the truth uttered! How evident is it, that the voice of the lauded one has but wrought on their ears a gentle titillation—that his discourse has but rolled over their hearts as a polished and pointless rotundity! Alas, for the reign of fashion and of worldliness, for the meagre prayer-meetings, and deserted closets, and careless, dying souls under such a ministry! It is, in fine, on scriptural utterances only, the divine blessing is to be expected. "The word of God," and that alone, is "the sword of the Spirit." The sum of our commission is, "Preach the preaching that I bid thee." We may not "add unto" it; we may not "take away from" it; we may not be "as many, which corrupt the word of God." And that word, we are told, "is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." It is "mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds." When, in the humble and faithful use of it, we honor God, then, and then only, will He put honor upon our ministry; he will "always cause us to triumph in Christ, and make manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place."

Fathers and Brethren—Is not the subject of our meditations,

this evening, eminently suited to the times? In what other direction can we find an effectual barrier against the incoming floods of error? Of many of the views presented, has there not been full confirmation in our own experience? When we have been most intimate with the divine word, has not our own piety been most vigorous—our preparation most ample for the work of the pulpit? Have not our most biblical discourses been those which have told most powerfully on human hearts? In scenes of revival, how has every thing called for scripture, and how have we had scripture for every thing! What seemed then our work but the simple echoing of the word of God? Is it amiss for us to ask, whether, in this respect, there has been no deterioration in our ministry, or whether, at least, there be not a deficiency? Are we not less scriptural than the Baxters, and Erskines, and Edwardses, of other times—those holy men whom God delighted to bless? May it not be one of the reasons why the influences of divine grace are so withheld from our congregations, that we give the people so much of our mind, and so little of God's? "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy that He cannot hear." Searching our hearts on this subject, and reviewing our ways, let us resort anew to the divine word. Let us prove to the utmost its saving power; and we shall feel, as never before, how true and how precious is that declaration—"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*"

SERMON CCCCLXXXVII.

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THE THOUGHTS OF GOD.

"O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep."—PSALMS 92 : 5.

"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!"—PSALMS 139 : 17.

To think is the property of mind, of immaterial and immortal spirit. Matter can be brought into the most complicated relations, the most elaborate and beautiful forms; but it cannot think. It can neither commence nor control a particular course of action. Thought is self-conscious, self-controlling, and appertains to a being of intelligence and will—a being, conscious of its own acts and plans, and capable of commencing, continuing, and directing particular trains of action. Matter may be made the vehicle of thought. It may transmit it by the mouth, the hand, the trumpet, the telegraph, but it cannot make it, cannot control it. Thinking is neither worked out nor ground out. It is neither light, nor heat, nor electricity. It is neither brain nor nerve, eye nor ear, head nor hand; though these all may transmit it, or receive it, under the direction of mind. Thought has nothing in it akin to matter or its motions: it is a thing by itself, an original, independent thing, having characteristics and powers of its own. It belongs to the spirit, and is spiritual in all its manifestations and results. And thus, if spirit is infinite and immortal, thought also is infinite and can never die.

Thought is the only thing free and independent; the only thing conscious and active; the only thing that knows and loves, suffers and rejoices; the only thing that creates and controls; the only thing that is great, and good, and eternal. How wonderful then is thought! How wonderful is man! Above all, how wonderful is God! Ah! what thinking is His. How infinite, how mysterious, how ineffable are His thoughts! "O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy *thoughts* are very deep."

We have said that thought is the only thing that loves. But "God is love!" Therefore all His thoughts are love. How tender, then, how generous and kind are those thoughts in reference to us. "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!

how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake I am still with thee."

Here is a great and awful mystery; in itself so stupendous as to appall and overwhelm the soul. The mind of God; the thinking of the Almighty—the infinite and everlasting thinking of Him, who is above all, through all, and in all. But it is the thinking of love; and this invests the mystery, dark and overpowering in itself, with a sweet and attractive radiance; so that hope springs from the mystery, and rejoices in its depth.

This, we think, was something of the experience of the Psalmist, as detailed in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm. Referring to the omnipresence and omniscience of God, he exclaims: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike unto thee. * * * * I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well."

Here the Psalmist beheld some of the thinking of God, in his own framework, and in the mysterious spirit by which it is inhabited. He trembled at himself, as a dread and fathomless mystery. But he is instantly reassured, by remembering the loving-kindness of the Lord, and hence he joyfully adds:—"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! when I awake I am ever with thee"—ever resting on the bosom of God,

> "Whose love doth keep,
> In its complacent arms, the earth, the air, the deep."

Here, then, my beloved brethren, is the mind of God—an infinite, unfathomable mystery, but a mystery of love. Thoughts deeper than the grave, stronger than hell, wider than the universe, more enduring than the everlasting hills—thoughts awful, mysterious, resistless, appalling—thoughts boundless, omnipotent, everlasting; but thoughts of love, thoughts of mercy and compassion to the children of men.

Let us consider this great and thrilling subject—the Thoughts of God. In the *first place*, let us inquire whether, and to what extent, the thoughts of God are attainable by us: Secondly, what are some of the Thoughts of God—what, especially, in reference to us, are His leading and most cherished Thoughts; in other words, what are some of the characteristics of God's Thinking.

I. In the *first place*, Are the Thoughts of God attainable by us; and, if so, how and to what extent?

We can reach the thoughts of our fellow-men: they gleam out upon their countenances, echo in their words, appear in their actions. We find them embodied in books, letters, inscriptions, monuments, buildings, canals, railroads, bridges, statues, and paintings. In all these we attain their thoughts, and make them our own. We reach thus, not only the thoughts of our contemporaries, but of those also who lived in past generations—of the Homers and Platos, the Pauls and the Luthers, the Newtons and the Miltons, the Halls and the Howards of by-gone times. By the same means we are able to transmit our thoughts to other lands and other times, and make them attainable even by those who may live at the close of time. It is questionable, however, whether we can attain all the thoughts even of man. There are trains of reflection, and especially trains of emotion, which never reach the surface of the soul; trains of thought and tides of feeling, not only too deep for tears, but too deep for words. Great and original spirits exist, much of whose thinking cannot be understood even when it is expressed, and much of whose thinking is too profound, too delicate and etherial, for words. How vast even the obscurities of Revelation. Ah! there are depths in the human soul and in the human heart, not attainable by any of us; depths which God alone can sound. Still, the thoughts of our fellow-men, generally speaking, are attainable by us; and oh! how interesting, sometimes, is the pursuit and acquisition of such thoughts. To reach, nay more, to become familiar with the thoughts of Plato, of Paul, of Luther, of Bacon, of Edwards, of Pascal, and of Foster, and not only so, but to make them our own, to weave them, like threads of gold, into the web of our own thinking, how desirable, how delightful!

So also we might attain the thoughts of angels, if we could only see their godlike faces, gleaming in the sunlight of heaven; or hear their mystic voices, uttering a language familiar to us; or read their thoughts, embodied in books, in works, or in actions. By these, and other means which are conceivable, we might, in some degree, understand and appreciate the thinking of angels. Moreover, what an acquisition this! Take one of them, for example, who, six thousand years ago, sang, with his compeers, the creation of the world, and has lived, in purity and blessedness, from that time till now, with all the accumulated treasures of his vast and varied experience, his profound and protracted thinking, in the very presence-chamber of the King of kings, and amid "the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers" of the heavenly state, with all that he has gathered from his meditations on nature and on God, and especially on the great work of Redemption by the Cross of Christ: let such an one communicate to us some

of his most intimate and cherished thoughts, on the nature and destiny of man, the work and glory of Christ, the beauty of holiness, and "the life everlasting,"—what an ineffable attainment, what an unspeakable blessing! How, in its unutterable radiance, would all our former thinking grow dim and vanish away! But it may be questioned whether, in our present state, we could understand much of the thinking of such a being; for its very luminousness might blind our eyes, and bewilder our minds. "Light, itself," as Sir Thomas Brown, quaintly but profoundly, remarks, "while it illuminates some things, casts others into shadow. The greatest mystery of religion is expressed by adumbration; and in the noblest parts of Jewish types, we find the Cherubim shadowing the Mercy Seat. The sun itself is but the dark simulacrum, and light but the shadow of God." How then can we attain the thoughts of God? How can we gaze upon the central Sun, and read the thoughts of God in the lines of infinite space? It would seem impossible. "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself!" exclaims the prophet, as if blinded by the excessive light of Jehovah's countenance. Thy thoughts, O God, are very deep! "O, the depths! O, the depths!" was the repeated exclamation of an old divine, when he had gained some slight conception of the counsels of God.

It must be clear, we think, from the very nature of the case, that we cannot attain all the thoughts of God; and that, in all probability, we can attain none of them in a perfect manner. "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" "Great is the mystery of godliness!" "O the depths both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways *past finding out!*"

But we can surely attain some of the thoughts of God. In other words, God can communicate Himself unto us. He can reach our minds, put us in possession of His thoughts. And yet, some have doubted this, and insisted, because we could know little, we could know nothing of God, either from nature or from revelation. But surely this is to limit the Holy One of Israel. It is to bind God himself in the chains of a resistless fate — a power stronger than Himself, a power which must be more than infinite, more than omnipotent—which is absurd. What! God not reveal Himself—not embody His thoughts—not transmit them to the mind of His creatures, if He so will it! Can we, creatures of a day, communicate with the distant, nay, with the unborn; can we incarnate our thoughts in books and works; can we send them, with lightning-speed, through a thousand miles of magnetic wire, making them luminous to the eye of the far-distant friend, and can God, the infinite, the omnipotent, not transmit His thoughts to the souls of the beings whom He has made? The idea is preposterous in itself, and moreover is stultified by facts.

Look around you, and within you, in your body, and in your soul, so fearfully and wonderfully made, and you will find the thoughts of God embodied, enshrined as it were, in living and beautiful forms. Look upwards to the heavens, amid suns and stars, and downwards to the earth, with hills and vales, woods and rivers, fruits and flowers—what see you? Thought! thought everywhere—thought embodied in permanent shapes, or leaping in living action, into permanent results. Here are wisdom the most wondrous, goodness the most amazing, power the most vast. Whose wisdom, whose goodness, whose power? Earth and sky, body and soul, themselves answer, God's! Are men blind or deaf that they do not attain these thoughts? Are they not written with sunbeams on the dark ground of heaven's concave? Are they not revealed in the beauty of the stars, in the splendor of the sun, shining down upon us from infinite depths, as if it were the eye of infinite love? Are they not charactered in green and blue, in purple and gold, upon the fair face of earth and ocean, mountain and meadow, forest and glen? Do we not hear them in the whispering winds, the rolling thunders, the rushing waves? Do we not see them, hear them, feel them, in the mystic chambers, the never-ceasing echoes of our own immortal spirit, when earth and sky are still, and nought is heard, nought is felt but the beatings of the heart?

"The world, the clustering stars, He made,
The glowing light, the soothing shade,
Dale, champaign, grove and hill,
The multitudinous abyss
Where secrecy remains in bliss,
And wisdom hides her skill.

Tell them I AM, Jehovah said
To Moses, while earth heard in dread,
And smitten to the heart,
At once, above, beneath, around,
All nature, without voice or sound,
Replied, O LORD, THOU ART!"

Yes, there are voices of God, symbols and revelations of God everywhere; and we have only to listen and read, to pause and meditate, to attain His mighty and mysterious thoughts.

But alas! we are sinners. "All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." Hence death has cast its awful shadow over the whole race of man. Sunshine, we know, plays around our path; but clouds and darkness intermingle with it, often obscure it, and in the end, even overpower it. We are guilty—we are condemned. Well, then, will God forgive us? Will he renew and sanctify us? Will he forgive and sanctify *me*, the chief of sinners, the vilest of the vile? If He is disposed to do so, upon what principles, and in what manner will he do it? How shall we approach Him, how assure our hearts before Him?

These are questions which neither nature nor the soul of man can answer. But God can answer them. He has answered them. "God was made flesh and dwelt among us." He came into the world, by His own beloved Son, and through that Son, has revealed His mercy, and proffered eternal life to all who repent and believe. Thus does He speak with the voice of Jesus, love with the heart of Jesus, reveal Himself in the face of Jesus. "He who caused the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus." This is a great mystery. Nevertheless, why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should manifest himself in human form; that he should look out from human eyes, speak with human lips, love with a human heart? "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, seen of angels, justified of the Spirit, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Here then, we have the most intimate and cherished thoughts of God with reference to the salvation of sinners, embodied in the life and teachings, the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. If then we can say, with the apostle, "We have the mind of Christ," we can also say, we have the mind of God.

"Here Love immortal leaves the sky,
To wipe the weeping mourner's eye,
And give the weary rest!"

O ineffable and adorable mystery! God speaks to us in Jesus, suffers for us in Jesus, reigns for us in Jesus!

II. We proceed to inquire, briefly, in the second place, what are the characteristics of the Divine Thinking?

In the *first place*, it infinitely transcends the thinking of men or angels. "O Lord, thy thoughts are very deep." "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my thoughts higher than your thoughts." God sees things as they are. At a glance, He penetrates all their essences. He comprehends them in Himself. For He is "before all things, and by Him all things consist." In Him "we live and move and have our being." The universe, therefore, lies before Him, and in Him, as a unit. He knows, He comprehends the whole—past, present, and to come, by an immediate intuition. Night and day, the darkness and the light, heaven and earth, time and eternity, are all alike to Him. So that all His thinking is infinite and absolute, without the possibility of error or of change. Our thinking, on the other hand, is limited, dependent, imperfect, a mere reflection of the truth, but not the truth itself. That exists, in its essence, only in the mind of God. Consequently, darkness and light are ever blended in our minds. We see but a few stars in a boundless depth of gloom. Beautiful, O how beautiful to life's voyagers; but far

away, in the heavens above. To us the whole creation is nothing more than the shadow of God—a shadow gloriously irradiated with light, but still a shadow. And even His word is but an adumbration of Him. We behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord. Nothing here is absolutely perfect. "We see through a glass darkly." The very light, glorious as it is, is but as darkness. Its perfection often blinds our eyes; its very beauty dazzles and bewilders our minds. Every truth is thus set in mystery, enshrined in darkness, like an undying lamp in a sepulchre.

This is especially the case with the more peculiar and cherished thoughts of God, respecting sin and holiness, destruction and salvation. Hence they sometimes appear strange, startling, appalling. We know not what to make of them, so different are they from all our preconceptions upon such subjects, and are sometimes tempted to reject them altogether. But we are instantly reassured, when we think of our own weakness and ignorance, and cry out in adoring wonder, "O the depths, O the depths, both of the wisdom and the goodness of God!" Furthermore, we ought never to forget that God reveals Himself to us only in part. Hence even prophets and apostles were compelled to say: "We know in part, and we prophesy in part. Behind and beyond all the revelations of God lie undiscovered fields of thought, into which the mind of man, in its loftiest excursions, can never penetrate. So also we live only in a small corner of His dominions, and see but the outskirts of creation, the beginnings of the future, the fragments of eternity. Ages must roll away before the thoughts and designs of God, even in reference to man, are fully developed. The thoughts of God are as boundless as Himself. They embody an infinite variety of plans and particulars, yet constituting a whole, a small portion of which only can be known to us, and stretch away into the immeasurable ages of that eternity of which we see only the dim and shadowy outline. "Lo, these are a part of his ways; but the thunder (the secret) of his power who can understand?" Who, then, can sit in judgment upon the thoughts of the Almighty? Who can criticize the teachings of the Infinite Mind? Who can foretell the issues; above all, who will try to forestall the issues of His all-comprehending wisdom, purity, and grace?

Are we to teach God, or is God to teach us? Are our thoughts to be the measure of His, or His the measure of ours? Are we to make a revelation to God, or is God to make a revelation to us? And if He makes it, are we to receive it or reject it, at our pleasure—to receive its glorious teachings, or subject them to our paltry criticism and logic?

In this view, how preposterous, nay, how impious the conduct of him who, while God's Word is in his hands, insists that God must do this, or that God must do that; who affirms that such

and such a doctrine of Divine Revelation is in itself credible or incredible, because he—wonderful man—happens to think so, or because he chances to comprehend or not to comprehend it; that such and such a thing, clearly revealed, cannot take place under the government of God, simply because it comes not within the analogies or experiences with which he is familiar? Is his mind larger or more comprehensive than Christ's, than God's? Does he know more than prophets and apostles? Can he illuminate the sun, and brighten the stars of heaven? Alas! how many men, abandoning the thoughts of God, and blindly following their own or those of other men, object, and that, too, right earnestly, to the idea of salvation through the substitutionary sufferings of the Son of God; just as if it had never been said in the Scriptures that "He who knew no sin was made sin for us." They cannot endure the idea that the innocent should suffer for the guilty; that "the just," by means of suffering and sacrifice, should make an atonement for sin, and thus bring us back to God. Such substitution, they say, is unjust and wrong, impious and absurd! On which ground they are compelled to affirm that Jesus suffered only as an example, not as an atoning sacrifice; that Jehovah did not need, could not therefore require, such an expiation; that He could forgive without a sacrifice, justify without an atonement: in a word, that He could redeem us, without a suffering and dying Saviour. So that, according to this view, we really need no infinite Saviour, no shedding of blood, no mediation, no intercession. But "my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord."—"Smite the shepherd," is His wondrous language, uttering the august and thrilling thought of His heart. And hence He hath "set forth" this thought before us, by "setting forth" Jesus Christ "to be a *propitiation* for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Yes, God knows what is necessary in such a case. O the depths! O the depths!

> "Heaven wept that man might smile,
> Heaven bled that man might never die."

Thus we are led, *secondly*, to remark that the thoughts of God are especially characterized by their tender and generous aspect in reference to us. "Herein is love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us." "O how precious are thy thoughts unto me!" Why? They are a Father's thoughts!—a Father that hath "so loved us as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have everlasting life." "As a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." His most awful and mysterious thoughts are penetrated with tenderness. All are concentrated on the salvation of

our souls. Far back in the abysses of a past eternity, and far onward in the boundless ocean of the future, His thoughts are thoughts of love. Hence he says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "For I am persuaded," says Paul, "that neither death nor life, angels nor principalities, things present nor things to come, height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

A few brief inferences of a practical kind will conclude this discourse.

1. If the thoughts of God are so precious, and can be attained by us, let us give all diligence, by the study of His Word and ways, to make them our own. And when we have found a *Divine Thought*, let us cherish it in our hearts, and never, never give it up, even if it should cost us our life to keep it. "I die," said one of the old Puritan soldiers in the time of Cromwell, "I die, but truth lives; and if truth lives, I also live. Truth is only enthroned by my dying; and if truth is enthroned, I too shall be enthroned!"

2. Let us form our thinking, as far as may be, on the model of the Divine. Let us acquire the habit of thinking in the light of the Infinite. Let us fall into those trains of thought which glide towards eternity. In a word, let us "walk in the light, and thus be followers of God, as dear children." "As a man thinketh, so is he." If, then, we can only steep our souls in the truth of God, which is the thinking of God, we shall become pure and serene, like angels and glorified spirits. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."

3. Let us embody all such thoughts in action; for this only will make them real to our minds and hearts. This alone will incorporate them with our moral life. "To restore a common-place-truth," says Coleridge, "to its first uncommon lustre, you need only translate it into action. But to do this, you must first have reflected on its truth." First, then, let us reflect, meditate on the thoughts of God, and then let us reduce them to action! Reflection, including prayer, is the practical basis of the Christian life—action is the superstructure. Both are indispensable to a symmetrical Christianity. For example, *God is love;* let us ever meditate upon that till the heart glows; and then go out into the world, overcoming *evil* with *good*, binding up the broken-hearted, reclaiming the wanderer, relieving the poor, in a word, benefitting and blessing all; and the idea that *God is love* will be invested with a new radiance. O what a flood of light does suffering for Christ and His cause shed upon the doctrine of the Cross. A speculator may doubt the sacrifice of Calvary, but an actor, a

worker for Christ will not. Spinoza and Hegel may lose sight of the beauty of holiness, but John Bunyan and William Brainerd never can. How precious the prospect of heaven, how beautiful, how inexpressibly beautiful the crown of glory which fadeth not away, to the eye of the dying martyr, falling asleep, amid agony and shame, in the full vision of the glory of God! "And now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!"

O God, thy thoughts are very deep! But O how precious! how tender and kind! With trembling and joy we receive them, as our heart's best treasure. We receive especially the doctrine of the Cross, and glory in it, as the light and life of our sin-stricken but immortal spirits. And now to Him that hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood—to the only wise God and our Saviour Jesus Christ—be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

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SERMON CCCCLXXXVIII.

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MAN RUINED.

"For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."—TITUS iii. 3-7.

THE method which God has adopted of conveying instruction to mankind is singularly adapted to the human mind. Avoiding the abstract and the general, so common and so unsuccessful in human teaching, our great Divine Instructor liberally uses illustration. One instance of this occurring so frequently as to be scarcely thought of as elevated above the plainest style, is contrast, antithesis.

Even in the external world, God adds impressiveness to His instructions by this very method of contrasting. The beautiful is made to appear more beautiful by being placed by the side of the deformed, and the fruitful more fruitful by being placed by the side of the sterile, and the useful more useful by being placed by the side of noxious. And all the three become in the same way more expressive of God's goodness and munificence. The lessons of Divine Providence have this same character of contrast. Every man's way of life has its roughness to make its smooth passages more valued, and every man's allotments of good follow close upon the heels of many evils to make him

take more careful note of them, and more gratefully enjoy them. In the Scriptures, God has to a still greater extent followed this mode of instruction. The contrast abounds in the Psalms, and Proverbs, and prophetical books, where the good and bad qualities, the prosperous and adverse conditions, the bright and dark prospects of men, are set over against each other. Most of our Saviour's parables are striking contrast. The good Samaritan and strait-hearted Levite—the boasting Pharisee and contrite Publican—the seed upon unpropitious places and that which fell upon good ground—they who are doers of the word which they hear, and they which do it not—the rich man in hell, and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom—the wise who took oil with their lamps and the foolish who neglected it—he who by good use multiplied his talents, and he who hid his lord's money in the earth and gained nothing. These are a few out of numerous instances from our Lord of this manner of teaching.

Our text is a specimen of this same method. We have first, man in his ruin, foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Then we have a reference to man in his recovery as visited by the kindness and love of God our Saviour, as purified by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost shed on him abundantly, as justified by grace, as believing in God and careful to maintain good works.

I propose to contemplate now, these two conditions of mankind, his ruin and his redemption, in accordance with the scriptural method by setting them over against each other.

I. *Man Ruined.*

1. One thing observable in the ruined condition of man is a bad state of his intellectual powers.

A serious injury has been done to the human understanding, a sad deterioration been wrought upon it. Great intellectual power and acomplishment by men involved in moral ruin, do not disprove this statement in respect to general influence. And these individual achievements, in most cases, remind us, painfully, how much brighter luminaries their authors would have been if sin had not obscured them. As an illustration of the influence which depravity is exerting over the understanding, you find men constantly who are ready to follow your intellectual processes, admit your positions, feel the force of your conclusions only when your logic rebukes none of their sins, sweeps away none of their fond justifications of darling indulgences. The moment your reasonings in their uncompromising course reach their intrenchments; show them they are untenable and dangerous—to drop the figure, the moment they demonstrate to them that their tempers

are wicked, their habits vices, their conduct destructive, then their minds are all dark to your discussion—your conceptions become inconceivable, your premises mere assumptions, your syllogisms fallacies, your conclusions arrogant assertions, and your own confidence ignorant effrontery. The intemperate man cannot easily see any force in the most conclusive argument against intoxicating drinks. A perfect demonstration of the absurdity of expecting remission of sins short of a Divine pardon through Christ, will have no effect on a Roman Catholic hearer intent upon unloading his conscience of a recent crime by carrying it to confession. Your exhortation to a company of misers to let go the world and raise their thoughts and affections to a treasure in heaven, though based upon the most just and weighty reasons, would be little more felt and obeyed, than a call on the rocks to leave their everlasting foundations and rise upward. Such facts show undeniably that the bad state of the heart affects injuriously the understanding, and therefore that on the intellect of the race, there has been before and must still a blighting influence, extensive and great in proportion to the moral ruin in which mankind are involved. As troubled waters show the imaged heavens broken up and irregular, so does the heart in commotion by sins and passions, present the human mind above disjointed, confused, perverted!

The same truth is farther confirmed by an observed regular increase of mental obliquity and debility as the inner man grows in corruption. Byron is a melancholy illustration of this remark. During the last ten years of his life, his intellectual faculties were so overborne and crushed by his internal debasement, as to be wholly incapable of the great clear thoughts and lofty aspirations of Child Harold, and his feelings were grown too course and low to have permitted the tenderness and delicacy of his pathetic compositions. Many who have in early life written what will live and be admired wherever the English tongue is spoken, after a greater growth of depraved tempers and deeper settlement of sin in the heart, have written only ribaldry, sickly sentimentalism, useless vagaries of the imagination, destined to be once read by those of kindred debasement, and then to sink into eternal forgetfulness. Salt waters at the roots of our trees are not more sure to scorch and kill the foliage above than are iniquities in the heart to wither and despoil the intellectual powers.

A brief survey of the world proves how universally the mental powers have felt the touch of sin, the general destroyer. In every place, in all time, wherever morals and manners have sunk, the human intellect has fallen also, just as the floating buoy settles when the waters ebb away underneath it. At the present time, wherever there is moral degradation there is a prostration of the intellectual powers: wherever the altars fail to burn with holy fire

their light is feeble in the human understanding. The great mass of men at this moment present the spectacle of mind overshadowed, diseased, and disabled, by the fog and miasma which come up from the stagnant places of the heart, and envelope it in darkness, and embue it with pestilence. Egypt is a mummy; Greece is a corpse—mind has almost departed from both; India is a vast prison-house, where intellect is shut up and bound. Mind in China is still more entirely prostrated by depravity, There have been intellects enough already in this latter country, probably, to people the earth as densely as it now is, ten times, making ten thousand millions of minds. These intellects, which might have lighted up the world, what have they accomplished? Scarcely one ray has shone out from them all, to instruct or bless mankind.

Of the one thousand millions now on the earth, not one mind in thirty thousand produces during life one useful treatise, one valuable invention, one important improvement, one good moral effect. Nothing is plainer than that the moral nature, in its fall, has dragged down the intellect with it; has given it a shock which has very seriously deteriorated all its powers. The mind was nobly built at first: spacious it was, grandly proportioned, strong, manageable, of a masterly movement of great accomplishments. But it is a wreck now, foundered, dismasted and bestormed.

The evil that has been done to man, in breaking down his intellect, is one of great magnitude: nothing but the corruption of his moral powers, the immediate cause of it, can be a greater mischief. A vast physical convulsion, that should sweep down our whole heavens, and leave them in perfect darkness, would not be a more stricking desolation than that which sin has effected, in drawing into darkness the intellects of the world.

2. A second thing observable in the ruined condition of man is, the subjugation of his reason to passion.

Reason is that part of the intellectual man which observes facts and makes conclusions; acquires data, and establishes principles. It is the mind's eye, to open for man his mental and moral pathway; it points him, when uninjured, to the course where lie his interests and his duties: it marks the right and good for his pursuit, and, with equal accuracy and fidelity, points out the wrong and bad, for his avoidance. Reason in man, original and uninjured, is thus the central light of all the other attributes, the eclipsing honor of the whole intellectual being.

The subjugation of this high power of man to passion, to corrupt propensities, so that bad affections shall govern and direct him, instead of right reason, is a deep degradation, an exceeding abasement. It is no relief to our regret and pain, to be told, what is undeniable, that there is no being alive who is not, in some degree, in this unhappy condition. It is no relief to hear it affirmed, that reason, if per-

mitted to hold its true place of supremacy, wholly uninfluenced by a bad heart, still would not be a sufficient guide to our best character, our greatest usefulness, and our highest good. Admit that it is not, alone, sufficient to guide us aright through time and through eternity, still, when its powers are vitiated and enfeebled, its perceptions made illusive, its inquiries doubtful, its conclusions false, by the domination, of unholy passions, a great light in man is obscured, an intelligent companion is become a shape of darkness, a wise instructor is become a dangerous guide.

The kind of domination which passion exercises over the faculty of reason might be inferred from its nature. Its disposition is to seize upon present gratification, irrespective of consequences utterly regardless of other more excellent enjoyments and possessions, which would be obtained by restraining and denying itself for the present. Being impulsive and headlong, without eyes, or ears, or apprehension, it is greatly unmanageable. It is a storm ; obstructions delay its course only to increase its destructive effects. It is heated steam ; outward pressure makes the explosion more sure and more dreadful when it comes.

The lordship of passion over reason is seen in the choice men make of the temporary, and uncertain, and worthless in the place of the enduring, and the sure, and the valuable. Of this we have painful illustrations in respect to the affairs and interests of the present life, but far more painful ones in respect to those of the life to come. You shall approach every family of the earth, and, as you enter, offer the inmates, in the name of our Heavenly King, the free forgiveness of all their sins, on the condition that they will consent to wear a character of true nobility and purity, and pursue a right course of life ; you shall offer them, on the same condition, the high honour of being members of God's own family, and of having angels sent to minister to them ; of possessing, instead of earthly riches, all the wealth of heaven ; instead of a home amid the instabilities of this scene, a house not made with hands, eternal and on high ; instead of evanescent pleasure, a happiness solid and satisfying, never to diminish, never to end. You shall make these proposals with the earnestness, sincerity, and eloquence of a messenger from the other world,—but how will you be met ? The munificent, most gracious proposals, will be, *generally*, rejected unhesitatingly.

But what do such things mean ? Are not men willing to be blest ? Have they lost their reason ? Oh yes ! they have lost their reason ; they are insane. Madness is in their hearts, while they live ; passion has taken possession, passion reigns. In its eager rush after present gratification, it has overthrown reason, and trampled upon it most mercilessly—crushed it into the dust. Its remonstrances are no more regarded than the idle wind. Everything is set aside which is in the

way of the momentary gratification of passion. One thing further is to be observed. Oftentimes it is not an actual gratification, not an actual possession, for the sake of which passion induces men to forego and to lose an infinite and an eternal good; only something prospective, something which may never be obtained. In one family to which you make the proposed liberal offers from your Master, *riches* may be the god of idolatry which makes your message spurned; but the wealth which occasions so wicked a rejection, may be separated from them by oceans and hemispheres. There may be many exchanges to be effected before they attain it, depending on the will and honesty of men on the other side of the world, over whom they have no control. Engines, perhaps, must play years before they can grasp it; ships be built and circumnavigate the globe. Perhaps a deep mine in the earth must pe penetrated. All of these preliminaries are the merest contingencies in the world. If it be *honour*, for which religion and heaven are set aside, that too is in the bosom of the future; that is the favor of a capricious people, which any breath may blow away. Thus things infinite and eternal, thus all the provided and garnered treasures of God's own peaceful heavens are set aside, for a unpossessed worldly good, lying in the distance, and subjected to the mere mercy of earth's fires, floods, tornadoes, and man's negligences, treacheries, piracies.

Folly! says reason, consummate folly!! thus for the doubtful to let go the sure; for the worthless to let go the valuable; for the temporal to hazard the eternal. Soul of man, dost thou expect to exist for ever? Then, shame on thee, everlasting shame, to give thy time and care to things that perish with the using, the things of a day. Objects to love, things to do, and sources of happiness there are, rich as thy largest desires—sure and enduring as thine own eternal being! Suppose we be fed to-day, if when to-day is gone we starve for ever. The ox may eat and drink what is before him, uncaring for the future. The bird may build a nest which the next winter shall destroy, and the beaver a cabin which the floods of the coming spring shall sweep away. But shall a man, a reasoning man, a man capable of looking before and after, a man immortal, a man who is to have interests and duties after this world is burned up, a man whose interests and duties shall increase in importance, rapidly increase for ever and ever—shall such a being submit to be so duped and ruled and ruined by reckless passion, and act for the present and uncertain only? So it is. Such is man. Almost a world may now be seen in a grand rush after the temporal, and uncertain, and worthless. Passion the grand moving power: passion at the ropes—passion at the helm—passion the pilot. This is the melancholy aspect and character of our moral ruin.

3. Another part of the ruin involving all mankind is a great deterioration of the conscience. It is a partial paralysis of that important attribute of the moral man which has occurred. We have now

no means of ascertaining what would be the character and influence of an uninjured conscience as it existed in the first man, when he issued fresh and perfect from the hand of his Maker. We can, however, from its accuracy, fidelity, and power in some cases, fairly infer what it would be if perfect in all other cases, and thereby also infer fairly what depreciation and perversion have occurred.

There are many instances in which conscience has asserted its high prerogative, and uttered its condemnations, with a power and fearlessness which may be supposed to be contained in the final announcements of the judgment-day. Cases there are in which a sense of guilt and of desert of punishment becomes so perfectly overwhelming and intolerable, that the individuals, unable to exist under the pressure, perish by derangement or suicide. "Conscience makes a man a coward," one is made to say, when contemplating an act of blood. "It makes a man a coward : a man cannot steal but it accuseth him—a man connot swear but it checks him." "It is a shamefaced spirit, and mutinies in a man's bosom ; it fills him full of obstacles. Between the acting of a dreadful thing and the first motion, all the interim is a hideous dream." Dreadful is the horror which,sometimes in health and life, but oftener in death, haunts the guilty mind. The anguish of a guilty conscience is distressing; sometimes the heart has no more power to conceal it, the mortal coil constitutes no vail over it. The very gait and mien reveal it—the countenance utters it,the eye is the perfect mirror of it. "Guiltiness will speak out, though tongues were out of use," These instances of its terrible visitations, in cases of great crime, are not the only instances of its presence and its power. These selected cases are adduced to show the existence, nature,intention,and capability of such a faculty. A grand deterioration conscience has undergone in that great ruin which has prostrated all our other moral powers.

As a general fact, under the withering influence of sin, conscience is coldly insensible in all matters of right and wrong, truth and error, religion and irreligion. There is not an individual in any community who does not go wrong seven times in a day, perhaps in an hour but how few and feeble are the rebukes of this monitor. Although conscience is God's great preacher of righteousness in every human habitation, to every human ear, yet now that the heart's depravities are gathered about it, even as a covering of mail, it sits often profoundly silent, or if it speak at all, prophesies deceit ; or what is little better, lifts its warning so very faintly, that nearly a world, in unalarmed apostacy, is pressing on to destruction. This ruin of conscience, leaving unbroken millions to go down to perdition almost unwarned, is one of the saddest and most striking features of that desolation which sin hath wrought upon man.

4. Another aspect of our race in its ruin is a desired and sought independence of God.—That is the grand crime of our world. It is called in Scripture, with great appropriateness, ungodliness. There is in this crime a violation of an obligation, the highest conceivable, the highest possible! In consequence of a relation to God on the part of man, infinitely intimate and interesting, the Creator requires of His creature—the great Ruler of His subject—the Benefactor of His beneficiary—the only Redeemer of the object of His mercy—affection, confidence, gratitude, obedience to the extent of his finite capacity. In defiance of an obligation to do this, which comprehends and transcends every other, fallen man takes a moral position independent of the Almighty. He cherishes no wish or intention to offer what is required of him so justly. This revolt of man from his Maker, to follow his own inclination and to set aside clear, illimitable, and acknowledged obligation to follow the will of heaven, is a great wickedness, a sin of exceeding sinfulness. It has every quality and every aspect of badness! and yet this great iniquity all men in their ruin do commit—with the guilt of it all are stained.

But there is in this crime more than a violation of obligation. There is a dreadful moral turpitude evinced in this thing, that the desired separation is from a being infinitely good! God is a perfect being. Perfect truth, perfect justice, perfect benevolence, are united in Him, and constitute his character, perfect holiness; constitute it one grand collected moral glory, from whence the universe is illuminated. The heart of man must have who wishes to separate himself from such a being, needs it any illustration; It is forsaking, renouncing, denouncing all goodness. These are feeble words. Who can take the dimensions of the idea—forsaking all goodness—where has he gone? I have no images or illustrations adequate to express the wickedness of leaving God; leaving all light, all goodness, all love; and then moving directly into the arms of Satan, and the bosom of darkness and despair.

Man's independence of God has two features and aspects with appropriate names, infidelity and idolatry. Infidelity is the same independence of God before spoken of, the same separation and revolt of the heart from His holy nature and just commands, together with an attempted apology for it. The apology is commenced in order to, soothe a disquiet of conscience for violation of conscious obligations, and ends with a despairing plunge into scepticism. We are concerned now with the true character of infidelity as just given. The soul's abandonment of God, the mind's prostitution of its noble powers to justify it. Among a certain portion of the family of man it appears in the form of blank, cold, atheism. God who is present everywhere, God who speaks to us in every star, and tree, and flower, who "lives through all life and spreads though all extent"—whose goodness is always to be seen, whose munificence is pouring its good things along

every man's path of life—God is shut out from His own world, and this creation, left without a creator these great laws without a law-giver, this vast form of nature without an author.

Another form of infidelity admits the existence and attributes of the Almighty, but repudiates any special system or interposition of grace or any need of it. It denies in part or in whole a Divine Revelation. It teaches that reformation at any time henceforward renders inquiry into the past unnecessary, that God will not be strict to mark iniquity, that the Divine favor can be obtained without Divine propitiation, that fair outward works are not so dead in God's estimation as to need the vitalities of faith, or so unavailing as to need the bitterness of repentance. Although virtue is better than vice, even according to this teaching, yet in the end, so kindly and pityingly does God look upon all, so much disposed is He to look upon man's transgressions as foibles and weaknessess rather than crimes, that without much distinction or censure He will gather them all into His arms of mercy. How is God's character slandered and outraged by such doctrines! How is His holiness tarnished, His law blotted out, His government unsettled; from the motions of sins nearly all restraint taken away; from deep swelling currents of iniquity nearly all obstructions removed! And this is the position of a great part of mankind. How perfectly has sin done its work of destruction on our race!

Another feature of man's independence of God is his idolatry. The idolatries of the world, show that our race, as the effect of its moral ruin, is in a melancholy condition. Whose heart does not ache to see a noble intelligence, made a little lower than the angels, instead of drawing near to worship the holy Almighty, to enter into an actual intercourse and communion with the Spirit of the Infinite Father of the universe, whereby he would grow into the likeness of God rapidly, and into the Spirit of Heaven—whose heart does not ache bitterly to see such an intelligence, instead of a high heavenly service and a growth towards the fulness of God, bowing down to birds and reptiles, and carved blocks and molten images, making cruelty and self-torture his repentance, low debaucheries his proof of zeal, loathsome wretchedness his claim to reverence, and his title to heaven! And this is only one of the various forms of an idolatry which exists everywhere. The world is a great scene of idols and idol-worship—under every green tree and on every high place are found its abominations.

For a moment take a general view of our world in moral ruin. "Here is the judge that takes a bribe." "Here is the pharisee that robs widow's houses and, in the interval between long prayers, wrings hard earnings out of the hands of the poor." Here is the man, soliciting to plead the cause of the cheated and wronged, who "under cover of the law's delay," cunningly delays his client's cause till his client's purse is empty. "Here is the villain at heart, who, with un-

hallowed passion" wins, ruins, then forsakes. "Here is the slanderer, who makes relished meals out of good men's names, and makes his pillow out of the peace of families." "Here is the man of envy, another word for gall and bitterness." "Here is the highwayman, the suicide, the duelist, the murderers of fathers and brothers." What is there not here! There is not one kingdom or province, not one palace or private dwelling, not one Indian hut or inhabited cave, not one dwelling-place of man on the face of the earth where the laws of heaven are not broken. There is not a tribe or nation in the present or past time that has not been engaged in murderous warfare. The sun has never yet risen on the world without seeing man slaughtering his brother man. Not a night has drawn its curtain over the world without being lighted by the camp-fires of opposing armies.

No city, and no man ever went to rest without leaving somebody awake, not far away, for purposes of crime. It seems as if the fountains iniquity in the heart were overflowing on every side, like an ocean with the shores all taken away. It seems as if the bad propensities had taken possession of the world, had ascended to the bench of the judge, to the hall of the legislature, to the office of the executive, to the ballot-boxes of the land, where mixing themselves with all the counsels of friendship, ruling in all the operations of buisness. "O! the deeds too, that the sun never shone upon! the sins that durst never seek repentance!"

And this is a world which punishment has failed to reform. Fire came upon several of its cities, and they were burned to ashes for their crimes; but Sodoms and Gomorrahs are still here, and send up to Heaven the cry of their great wickedness. A flood once drowned the world for its dreadful corruption; but upon every generation since, another has been needed to ease creation of the shocking scenes enacted on the earth. Nothing has taught the world righteousness—still it is a great Aceldama—a very Golgotha! still do the "times rain blood!"

SERMON CCCCLXXXIX.

MAN RECOVERED.

We have looked at man as *ruined*. Let us now comtemplate him as *recovered*.

No sooner was man fallen and involved in moral ruin, than a plan of recovery was brought into operation. This plan is that of the gospel, which is worthy of all acceptation. The arrangements for man's deliverance are exactly adjusted to the object to be accomplished, the antidote is as powerful as the disease; the reparation as ample as the injury. Sin has done nothing which the gospel has not provided to undo; sin has brought no degradation from which the gospel cannot raise us; led us into no danger, or sorrow, or fear, or suffering, from which the gospel cannot set us wholly and for ever free.

The remedial arrangements have not full operation and effect in the case of any individual in this present life. We shall have, therefore, no communities in a state of complete redemption from the ruins of the fall—no perfect paradise on earth; neither shall we have any individuals to point to, from whom the last stain of sin, the last vestige of man's fall is removed. But we shall see the mitigations of moral disease—the incipient stages of recovery. We shall see the commencing freshness, vivacity, and vigor of moral health. We shall see springing up everywhere upon the soil so overgrown with noxious things, the blessed fruits of righteousness. Wherever there was darkness in the soul or the path of man, we shall see light arising. Where ever there had been evil affections, there we shall witness heavenly tempers supplanting them, overgrowing them, extinguishing them: wherever pernicious deeds, there excellent acts of charity and great usefulness.

1. In our view of man, in his ruin, we considered the injuries which have been done to his intellectual powers. I begin at the same point in a survey of the condition which he is in the process of attaining in his recovery.

In the first place, as a part of that recovery, is a progressing emancipation of the faculties of the mind from the clogs, palsies, and obstructions of sin. This is an important deliverance. Escaped from all these, as it will be when redemption is perfect, the human mind, it seems to me, will appear in action and progress what it is, a glorious thing, struck off from the great Infinite Mind—a creation with many of the aims and attributes of its superior Original. It will open to truth and make achievements with a joyousness and power which none but a freed intellect itself can understand and measure. We have but a faint conception now of mind undarkened, disenthralled. We have never had any specimens. Fettered, unwinged, benighted, we have

always seen it. Once uncaged, loossened, fairly out on its own pinions, it would spread itself, and soar, and show us how much like its great Author it is in character and power. Approximations it makes to this energy and elevation in proportion as the gospel exerts over the heart its redeeming effects.

Besides the removal of impediments, this same gospel exerts direct and positive influences on the human mind. The greatness of the objects which it presents and renders delightful to the intellect gives it growth and energy. These objects, among which the mind of man finds itself as it emerges out of its ruin into the sphere of salvation, have attributes of all conceivable perfection and of all possible vastness and grandeur. The divine plan by which our redemption is effected, including its history, aspects, accomplishments; the capacities and destinies of man; the attributes and mighty acts of the great Eternal; the holy majesty of the divine law; the full glories of heaven —such are the themes of the redeemed mind. In conversing with them it feels itself a part of them. It receives a token and tone of them all; it is carried by them, and along with them, in a higher, wider sphere, and made strong to services of good. How much larger and grander the intellect opened to the eternal Throne, with all the greatness and glory seated upon it, than when narrowed and shrivelled up to dollars, evanescent pleasures, mortal honours.

The influence of the religious affections on the intellect is more marked still, and more powerful. I know not according to whose philosophy the mind of man acts, nor would I discuss the question now whether it have distinct faculties, or exist only as an indivisible whole in the form of individual states. One fact is evident, its condition, at a given time, essentially influences its condition at the time immediately succeeding, and I have no doubt that an antecedent strong feeling does more than an antecedent powerful intellection to arouse the mind to great exertions. Increased fires are no more sure to awake and accelerate the connected machinery, than is a high enthusiasm of the emotions to kindle and push the understanding into powerful action and accomplishment. The affections of religion are the most living, stirring, energetic permanent, which belong to our nature. Infinite and eternal things feed them! If therefore the excitement of the intellect is correspondent to the ardour that glows in the heart, it will be an unusual stir, and vivacity, and power, which will be induced upon the understanding by the warming presence of religion. Live fire in the heart will never fail to put the intellectual powers all in a glow. The entrance of thy word giveth light, saith the Bible. Emphatically is the transition from sin to holiness, a passage from darkness to light.

The most important influence of redemption on the intellectual powers is the direction of them to useful exertions. In communities where many have been redeemed to the blessings and hopes of religion,

there is a great deal of intellectual effort for the good of man, on the part of those who are neglecters of personal piety. The gospel, however, though it do not give birth to it directly, is to have the credit of so much of this service as has existed in consequence of its own presence and power. To perceive, therefore, what the gospel is doing in turning the intellects of men into useful channels, we must mark the character and tendency of the productions of Pagan mind, in contrast with all the elevated works of science, art, and religion, produced and circulated in Christian nations. But, in the case of all the trophies of grace, there is a direct appropriation of the intellectual powers to human good. The very day on which a man becomes a Christian, he commences intellectual ministrations in behalf of those who surround and who journey with him to the grave and the judgment. He is at the bedside of the dying, offering consolation, pointing the departing spirit home, lending wings! He is giving lessons of instruction to the ignorant, and admonitions to the wayward. All the good books with which our Sabbath-schools are furnished, and with which our centre-tables might be adorned; all the rich works on morals, on the divinity of the Scriptures; all the illustrations of the Bible; all the inculcations of truth by the wise and good of previous ages and of the present time, are the labors of mind imbued, sanctified, directed by the gospel. Eighty thousand pulpits are now uttering the deep thunders of God's law into the ears of the guilty, to keep the world in awe! Eighty thousand, in tones of compassion, learnt in heaven, are offering pardon and peace, glory and immortality. They are minds redeemed, which in these pulpits wake these thunders, and sound out these proclamations of mercy. In all the nurseries of religion with which our land is blessed, from the family fireside to the theological seminary, the young intellect and the young heart of the country is budding into character, and influence, and eternal life, under the bland and holy power of evangelized mind Under the same power, hundreds of thousands have risen and are now rising in heathen lands from their degradation and idolatry to light, life, and Christian hope. Springing up under intellect, pervaded, prompted, directed by the gospel, are asylums, hospitals, infirmaries, houses of refuge, charity-schools, to relieve disease, to smooth down care, to light up the heart of despair, to instruct the poor, to reclaim the wicked. Intellects, inspirited and turned by the gospel to such accomplishments, set up as orbs of light, to shine upon intellects that shall shine again, enriched to be fountains of blessings to them, who in turn shall themselves be blessings:— these present a deeply interesting and magnificent spectacle. I would rather bear a part, as a servant of the gospel, in sanctifying and planting in his orbit one such intellect thus to shine and thus to bless, than to put the stars and sun in their places. I should have assisted an accomplishment infinitely more enduring. Sanctified intellects will remain to pour abroad their illuminations, when these heavens are no more.

some sunny hill-side of the heart, falling from stone to stone, and from crevice to crevice, but there is a thawing and gathering on both sides continually. There is soon a rill, then a generous stream, and if a man live long in the world, a full and strong tide. Finally, almost the whole soul will seem to flow with human sympathies. Little charities become great ones. The small cloud, no larger than a man's hand that watereth a single field, enlarges, thickens, covers the whole heavens, refreshes a hemisphere. If changes, convulsions, and incomings of selfishness, ever stop and crush any of the desires and doings of this holy sympathy, the effect will be temporary, they will reappear and live again, like the verdure of our forests after winter is gone. This is a most blessed character which the gospel impresses upon all the trophies of its grace; for until the consummation, when this world is burned up, all practicable sympathies and almsdeeds will be constantly needed.

The fellow-feeling of the gospel has a great and special interest in the religious worth and happiness of mankind. The kind feeling for kindred and countrymen and old acquaintance, possessed by most men, may prompt many solicitudes for the sick, the needy, and the suffering; may bring substantial aid by many liberal acts and bestowments. But this Christian love begotten of the gospel, not overlooking blessed ministrations for the relief of all worldly wants and bodily calamities, reserves its riches and deepest sympathies, its most painful self-denials, its greatest labours and love and works of faith in behalf of men's religious and eternal interests. Pained at the presence of moral darkness, grieved at the sight of hearts engraved with the image and superscription of sin, it has no rest till the light of God's Spirit breaks through that darkness, and Jesus dwells and reigns in those hearts. There is not one parched and desolate wanderer, whom the possessor of this evangelic fellow-feeling would not lead to the river of life. Satan hath not bound upon any man a chain which he would not assist to break; nor any man dragged into degraded acts, which he would not assist him to forsake. There is not a pure feeling, a holy motive a virtuous deed, an elevated hope, a true enjoyment possible to any human being that he would not assist him to possess.

Christian fellow-feeling is a noble quality of character. It fits men, remarkable to dwell together in the same world, still more remarkable to live in the closer proximity of the same town or city or neighbourhood. It is a still more essential qualification for heaven. There the inhabitants will dwell in close association, with all partition-walls broken down. There will be in that world no mountain ranges or uninhabited deserts to separate men; no national peculiarities, no exclusive communion, no sectarian lines will be maintained there to keep men asunder. No difference of language will separate them; Greek and Jew, African and European, Englishman and Chinese, Arabian and French-

man, will speak in one tongue, will constitute one vast affectionate brotherhood.

Heaven is social, joyously social. Heart loves to meet heart, faith to meet faith, gratitude, to meet gratitude, joy to meet joy, hallelujah to meet hallelujah. Fellow-feeling! enlarged, sanctified fellow-feeling, it is made for earth: it is made for heaven; it is made for man, for angels, for the adorable Trinity! It is made for the universe! Thanks to God that it comes with redemption, that the gospel breathes it into every spirit which it rescues from sin and makes a candidate for glory and honor and immortality.

4. Another characteristic feature of men redeemed is, that they have come into an affectionate alliance with God. Man, as a creation of His hand, a subject of his government, a beneficiary on his bounty, an object of His redeeming provision, was always in an interesting relation to the Deity. In the state of redemption there is more than an interesting relation subsisting between man and his Maker. There is cordiality, communion. There is a going over of the heart to God so as to be in harmony and blessed agreement with the divine moral emotions. There is carried over with it the understanding, the will, the external acts. There is yielded the whole being filially to the Infinite Father. This is a blessed alliance. This is being one with God, according to the Scriptures. This is being followers of God as dear children. This is abiding in God! This is God dwelling with man, and man with God. This is walking with God. This is being hid with Christ in God.

Such an affectionate union with the great Eternal is one of the most important character conceivble. Only the Omniscient One himself can comprehend its exalted nature and infinite value.

Jehovah is the grand model and standard of moral worth for the universe. He possesses all excellence. He communicates the same to all who are allied to him, most freely, grace for grace—a grace to them, that is, for every grace of his own. His bestowments, in other words, are in proportion to his own great, perfect, holy nature. He shines upon his people, and they grow with the heavenly light. His perfect benevolence, truth, justice, are presented before them; and in their clear hearts are imaged the same high qualities, like the heavens in the waters below. Thus the rays of God's own glory do actually brighten and warm on penitent souls, and they are constantly attracted nearer and nearer to the great Infinite One from whom the riches of grace proceed. In these approaches made by God's people towards the source of all light and goodness, bad and corrupting things are continually escaped from, and influences more and more powerful and are felt. The more they rise and live before their Heavenly Father, the more fully do they loosen and throw off the grave-cloths which they wore when they were dead in trespasses and sins. The farther they penetrate

into the glories of God, the more they hasten to put on the garments of life, And these are the people of God redeemed by the gospel. *People of God!* We use the terms people of China, people of America; but what is it to be the people of God! High are their privileges! They commit their understandings to the light of God's word, their hearts to the spirit of God's word. God, from on high, smiles upon them. Wayfarers though they be in this world, soon they shall find an everlasting home, and their wanderings all cease. Bestormed voyagers though they be, they shall quickly be fast at anchor beyond all storms. People of God! Let me be one of them, and nought besides will I ask for, not even for crowns, or thrones, or worlds.—Stop! Yes I will. I am wrong. I will ask for them all; and I shall receive them. All that the Father hath is mine! It is enough—He himself is mine! and He is all and in all—He is the universe!

A community constituted of the true people of God would present a young heaven here below. Intellect would appear greatly enlarged towards that eternity which is "its lifetime, and that infinity which is its home." The heart would show itself at full revolt against its own appetites and corruptions, scorning the world's temptation, wearing the manifest image of God, growing ripe for heaven. Society, acknowledging "Thus saith the Lord," its high authority, and the golden rule of Christ, its great, irreversible principle, would present a scene of most happy adjustments and of tranquillized prosperity. In that scene man betrays not his neighbor, nor withholds from any sufferer his blessing. Deadly weapons are laid aside. Because there are no enemies, walls and fortifications decay and fall; the pirate-ship and the man-of-war lie rotting on the sea. Miracles of mercy renew the scenes of the Pentecost; God descends to visit his people, and Zion is become the joy of the whole earth. Oh, it is a fair and blessed scene which the gospel can reproduce, even out of the desolation and ruin with which the Fall has overspread the world! Two inferences deducible from this discussion

1. The redemption of the world is a work suited to the great attributes of Jehovah, and may therefore be looked forwith unhesitating hope. It is a far higher work than the original creation. In it the power, wisdom, and benevolence of God are much more fully called into requisition. It is the grandest achievement, we have reason to believe, which even the infinite mind of God has ever contemplated. We can easily conceive and admit, that in other worlds there may be operations of physical power surpassing, in extent and magnificence, any which have been displayed in our little corner of the universe; but we can neither conceive nor admit that any work of the Almighty, in any world, or in any part of eternal duration, surpasses the labors of His moral omnipotence in the redemption of man from his ruin. True, His first construction was a creation, and required Divine energies. God's highest effort in that case, however, was to rear up

out of fitting materials at hand, a good physical frame; breathe into its vacant, clean apartments, a living soul, and then the work was done. But in redemption there is a preliminary labor. There is an old structure—heavy, cumbrous, falling, dangerous—to be taken down, even to its foundations, and then removed finally away. In scripture language, there is an old man, with his lusts, to be disarmed, silenced, crucified, put off, laid to rest in his grave. To use another scriptural allusion, the deep stains of sin are to be washed away, the motions of sins suppressed, evil passions hushed, inveterate habits broken up, perversions of reason removed.

Then also there is to be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. The dead are to be raised. Moral life is to set forward its vitalities in the very place of former disease and death; reason is to be set up on its prostrated throne; conscience to be reinstated in its former position as God's vicegerent; holiness to be made to gush up, as a well of living water in the old heart of rottenness. All this is to be done with the prince of the power of the air, the malace of all devils, and all wickedness in high places, in full and determined opposition to the work of the Lord. If to create a world out of nothing, and then to people it was a work worthy of Jehovah, what more suited to omnipotence and infinite grace than to recover it from a wide, desolating, entire destruction; to repeople it out of the fragments and devastations, the scathed and disseverated elements that are left; to create a scene of glorious moral life out of the bones and dust of a universal moral ruin. This, that is worthy of Heaven, Heaven has undertaken and will accomplish. The world is to be recovered. Already in this work of redemption have been witnessed more important and remarkable movements, more munificent arrangements of mercy, more signal displays of power, more memorable acts of condescension, wisdom, grace, and compassion, than in all other of the doings of Jehovah. No doubt he regards it as the grand crowning achievement of His whole moral administration. It is, therefore as certain to be accomplished as God is to exist. The world is to be all evangelized? Praise the Lord! Praise Him from the Heavens. Praise Him from the heights. Praise ye Him all his angels. Praise ye Him sun and moon. Praise Him all ye stars of light. Praise Him ye heaven of heavens. Praise the Lord from the earth. Mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cattle; kings of the earth and all people; princes and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens, old men and children—let them praise the name of the Lord. He will save even to the uttermost; every kindred, and nation, and tongue, and people, shall acknowledge Him. All flesh shall see His salvation.

2. The recovery of man presents also a noble field of labor for human enterprise. That which is great, wide, enduring, important enough to engage the enthusiasm of Heaven, may well be deemed

worthy of our prayers, our time, our warmest ardour. The great interests of our fellow-men which are concerned, render the work of redemption a very interesting object for human enterprise. The clearing away of darkness from the human mind; the arousing its powers and directing them into noble and useful channels; the effecting a resurrection of conscience, informing it and giving it rightful supremacy and influence; the calling men away from their idolatries and persuading them into affectionate and confiding alliance with God; the introducing into the hearts of men that gentleness that suffereth long and is kind, that expansive love that goes out to every human being; the planting humility wherever there is pride. contrition wherever there is impenitence, faith wherever there is infidelity, reverence wherever there is profaneness, peace wherever there is strife, right wherever there is wrong, joy wherever there is gloom, hope wherever there is despair, light wherever there is darkness, life wherever there is death—engagement in such accomplishments demands the highest zeal of which we are capable. Angels desire to look into the records and triumphs of this enterprise. As the crowding throng of redeemed ones ascending to join them is swelled, Heaven seems to them a place of more glory and joy. The just made perfect are themselves immensely interested. They see that every encroahment on the kingdom of darkness, every trophy won from Satan, brightens the Redeemer's glory, and they kindle and rise to a higher ascription to the Lamb, that was slain.

Come, ye Christians that labor on earth, with new zeal and enterprise join in one grand interest with those that dwell in heaven. Sympathise with them in the same vast scheme of eternal love. Enter heartily into this high field of labor, where are toiling angels, the just made perfect, the Eternal One, the blessed Saviour. Not on earth, not in heaven, not in any place under God's government, not in any part of your eternal course, can you do anything worthier, holier, than to spread wide Christ's salvation. I rejoice to know that Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, the twelve apostles, Paul, Silas, Timothy, Father Irenæus, Polycarp, Wickliffe, Luther, Calvin, Knox, and all along upon the top of passing centuries, numerous others of kindred spirits have loved this great enterprise of human salvation. And *you* are made for this grand engagement, Christian brethren, your intellects and your hearts do feel at home, and grow strong and joyous in it. You love power, greatness, accomplishment! And here in the cause of God, are they all opened to you. Up! every friend of Christ, up to this great work of redeeming mercy. No efforts are too strong, no sacrifices too great, to be made in its behalf.

May we all regard it now as we shall hereafter, when dying with a hope full of immortality! May we all regard it now as we shall regard it when we enter heaven, and begin to walk under the splendors of the Eternal Throne, and join in the everlasting song of the redeemed!

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